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THE NOVELS AND WRITINGS

OF

JANE AUSTEN

J. Austen

ATHENAEUM EDITION

THE
NOVELS OF
Jane Austen

VOLUME VI

LADY SUSAN
A MEMOIR

THE WATSONS
LETTERS

ILLUSTRATED

THE ATHENAEUM CLUB
NEW YORK

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02535

University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, U.S.A.

LADY SUSAN.

PREFACE.

I HAVE lately received permission to print the following tale from the author's niece, Lady Knatchbull, of Provender, in Kent, to whom the autograph copy was given. I am not able to ascertain when it was composed. Her family have always believed it to be an early production. Perhaps she wrote it as an experiment in conducting a story by means of letters. It was not, however, her only attempt of that kind; for "Sense and Sensibility" was first written in letters; but as she afterwards re-wrote one of these works and never published the other, it is probable that she was not quite satisfied with the result. The tale itself is scarcely one on which a literary reputation could have been founded: but though, like some plants, it may be too slight to stand alone, it may, perhaps, be supported by the strength of her more firmly rooted works. At any rate, it cannot diminish Jane Austen's reputation as a writer; for even if it should be judged unworthy of the publicity now given to it, the censure must fall on him who has put it forth, not on her who kept it locked up in her desk.

LADY SUSAN.

I.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mr. Vernon.

LANGFORD, Dec.

MY DEAR BROTHER, — I can no longer refuse myself the pleasure of profiting by your kind invitation when we last parted of spending some weeks with you at Churchhill, and therefore, if quite convenient to you and Mrs. Vernon to receive me at present, I shall hope within a few days to be introduced to a sister whom I have so long desired to be acquainted with. My kind friends here are most affectionately urgent with me to prolong my stay, but their hospitable and cheerful dispositions lead them too much into society for my present situation and state of mind; and I impatiently look forward to the hour when I shall be admitted into your delightful retirement.

I long to be made known to your dear little children, in whose hearts I shall be very eager to secure an interest. I shall soon have need for all my fortitude, as I am on the point of separation

from my own daughter. The long illness of her dear father prevented my paying her that attention which duty and affection equally dictated, and I have too much reason to fear that the governess to whose care I consigned her was unequal to the charge. I have therefore resolved on placing her at one of the best private schools in town, where I shall have an opportunity of leaving her myself in my way to you. I am determined, you see, not to be denied admittance at Churchhill. It would indeed give me most painful sensations to know that it were not in your power to receive me.

Your most obliged and affectionate sister,

S. Vernon.

II.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mrs. Johnson.

Langford.

You were mistaken, my dear Alicia, in supposing me fixed at this place for the rest of the winter: it grieves me to say how greatly you were mistaken, for I have seldom spent three months more agreeably than those which have just flown away. At present, nothing goes smoothly; the females of the family are united against me. You foretold how it would be when I first came to Langford, and Mainwaring is so uncommonly pleasing that I was not without apprehensions for myself. I remember saying to myself, as I drove to the house, "I like this man, pray Heaven no harm come of it!" But I was determined to be discreet, to bear in mind my being only four months a widow, and

to be as quiet as possible: and I have been so, my dear creature; I have admitted no one's attentions but Mainwaring's. I have avoided all general flirtation whatever; I have distinguished no creature besides, of all the numbers resorting hither, except Sir James Martin, on whom I bestowed a little notice, in order to detach him from Miss Mainwaring; but if the world could know my motive there they would honor me. I have been called an unkind mother, but it was the sacred impulse of maternal affection, it was the advantage of my daughter that led me on; and if that daughter were not the greatest simpleton on earth, I might have been rewarded for my exertions as I ought.

Sir James did make proposals to me for Frederica; but Frederica, who was born to be the torment of my life, chose to set herself so violently against the match that I thought it better to lay aside the scheme for the present. I have more than once repented that I did not marry him myself; and were he but one degree less contemptibly weak, I certainly should: but I must own myself rather romantic in that respect, and that riches only will not satisfy me. The event of all this is very provoking: Sir James is gone, Maria highly incensed, and Mrs. Mainwaring insupportably jealous; so jealous, in short, and so enraged against me, that, in the fury of her temper, I should not be surprised at her appealing to her guardian, if she had the liberty of addressing him: but there your husband stands my friend; and the kindest, most amiable action of his life was his

throwing her off forever on her marriage. Keep up his resentment, therefore, I charge you. We are now in a sad state; no house was ever more altered: the whole party are at war, and Mainwaring scarcely dares speak to me. It is time for me to be gone: I have therefore determined on leaving them, and shall spend, I hope, a comfortable day with you in town within this week. If I am as little in favor with Mr. Johnson as ever, you must come to me at 10 Wigmore Street; but I hope this may not be the case, for as Mr. Johnson, with all his faults, is a man to whom that great word "respectable" is always given, and I am known to be so intimate with his wife, his slighting me has an awkward look.

I take London in my way to that insupportable spot, a country village; for I am really going to Churchhill. Forgive me, my dear friend, it is my last resource. Were there another place in England open to me, I would prefer it. Charles Vernon is my aversion, and I am afraid of his wife. At Churchhill, however, I must remain till I have something better in view. My young lady accompanies me to town, where I shall deposit her under the care of Miss Summers, in Wigmore Street, till she becomes a little more reasonable. She will make good connections there, as the girls are all of the best families. The price is immense, and much beyond what I can ever attempt to pay.

Adieu, I will send you a line as soon as I arrive in town.

Yours ever, S. VERNON.

III.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

CHURCHHILL.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I am very sorry to tell you that it will not be in our power to keep our promise of spending our Christmas with you; and we are prevented that happiness by a circumstance which is not likely to make us any amends. Lady Susan, in a letter to her brother-in-law, has declared her intention of visiting us almost immediately; and as such a visit is in all probability merely an affair of convenience, it is impossible to conjecture its length. I was by no means prepared for such an event, nor can I now account for her ladyship's conduct; Langford appeared so exactly the place for her in every respect, as well from the elegant and expensive style of living there, as from her particular attachment to Mr. Mainwaring, that I was very far from expecting so speedy a distinction, though I always imagined from her increasing friendship for us since her husband's death that we should, at some future period, be obliged to receive her. Mr. Vernon, I think, was a great deal too kind to her when he was in Staffordshire; her behavior to him, independent of her general character, has been so inexcusably artful and ungenerous since our marriage was first in agitation that no one less amiable and mild than himself could have overlooked it all; and though, as his brother's widow, and in narrow circumstances, it was proper to render her pecuniary assistance, I cannot help thinking his pressing in-

vitation to her to visit us at Churchhill perfectly unnecessary. Disposed, however, as he always is to think the best of every one, her display of grief, and professions of regret, and general resolutions of prudence were sufficient to soften his heart, and make him really confide in her sincerity; but as for myself, I am still unconvinced, and plausibly as her ladyship has now written, I cannot make up my mind till I better understand her real meaning in coming to us. You may guess, therefore, my dear madam, with what feelings I look forward to her arrival. She will have occasion for all those attractive powers for which she is celebrated to gain any share of my regard; and I shall certainly endeavor to guard myself against their influence, if not accompanied by something more substantial. She expresses a most eager desire of being acquainted with me, and makes very gracious mention of my children, but I am not quite weak enough to suppose a woman who has behaved with inattention, if not with unkindness to her own child, should be attached to any of mine. Miss Vernon is to be placed at a school in London before her mother comes to us, which I am glad of, for her sake and my own. It must be to her advantage to be separated from her mother, and a girl of sixteen who has received so wretched an education could not be a very desirable companion here. Reginald has long wished, I know, to see the captivating Lady Susan, and we shall depend on his joining our party soon. I am glad to hear that my father continues so well; and am, with best love, etc.,

CATHERINE VERNON.

IV.

Mr. De Courcy to Mrs. Vernon.

PARKLANDS.

MY DEAR SISTER, — I congratulate you and Mr. Vernon on being about to receive into your family the most accomplished coquette in England. As a very distinguished flirt I have always been taught to consider her, but it has lately fallen in my way to hear some particulars of her conduct at Langford, which prove that she does not confine herself to that sort of honest flirtation which satisfies most people, but aspires to the more delicious gratification of making a whole family miserable. By her behavior to Mr. Mainwaring she gave jealousy and wretchedness to his wife, and by her attentions to a young man previously attached to Mr. Mainwaring's sister deprived an amiable girl of her lover.

I learnt all this from Mr. Smith, now in this neighborhood (I have dined with him, at Hurst and Wilford), who is just come from Langford, where he was a fortnight with her ladyship, and who is therefore well qualified to make the communication.

What a woman she must be! I long to see her, and shall certainly accept your kind invitation, that I may form some idea of those bewitching powers which can do so much — engaging at the same time, and in the same house, the affections of two men, who were neither of them at liberty

to bestow them — and all this without the charm of youth! I am glad to find Miss Vernon does not accompany her mother to Churchhill, as she has not even manners to recommend her; and according to Mr. Smith's account, is equally dull and proud. Where pride and stupidity unite there can be no dissimulation worthy notice, and Miss Vernon shall be consigned to unrelenting contempt; but by all that I can gather Lady Susan possesses a degree of captivating deceit which it must be pleasing to witness and detect. I shall be with you very soon, and am ever

Your affectionate brother,

R. DE COURCY.

V.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mrs. Johnson.

CHURCHHILL.

I RECEIVED your note, my dear Alicia, just before I left town, and rejoice to be assured that Mr. Johnson suspected nothing of your engagement the evening before. It is undoubtedly better to deceive him entirely, and since he will be stubborn he must be tricked. I arrived here in safety, and have no reason to complain of my reception from Mr. Vernon; but I confess myself not equally satisfied with the behavior of his lady. She is perfectly well-bred, indeed, and has the air of a woman of fashion, but her manners are not such as can persuade me of her being prepossessed in my favor. I wanted her to be delighted at seeing

me. I was as amiable as possible on the occasion, but all in vain. She does not like me. To be sure, when we consider that I did take some pains to prevent my brother-in-law's marrying her, this want of cordiality is not very surprising, and yet it shows an illiberal and vindictive spirit to resent a project which influenced me six years ago, and which never succeeded at last.

I am sometimes disposed to repent that I did not let Charles buy Vernon Castle, when we were obliged to sell it; but it was a trying circumstance, especially as the sale took place exactly at the time of his marriage; and everybody ought to respect the delicacy of those feelings which could not endure that my husband's dignity should be lessened by his younger brother's having possession of the family estate. Could matters have been so arranged as to prevent the necessity of our leaving the castle, could we have lived with Charles and kept him single, I should have been very far from persuading my husband to dispose of it elsewhere; but Charles was on the point of marrying Miss De Courcy, and the event has justified me. Here are children in abundance, and what benefit could have accrued to me from his purchasing Vernon? My having prevented it may perhaps have given his wife an unfavorable impression; but where there is a disposition to dislike, a motive will never be wanting; and as to money matters it has not withheld him from being very useful to me. I really have a regard for him, he is so easily imposed upon! The house is a good one, the furniture fashionable, and everything an-

nounces plenty and elegance. Charles is very rich, I am sure; when a man has once got his name in a banking-house, he rolls in money; but they do not know what to do with it, keep very little company, and never go to London but on business. We shall be as stupid as possible. I mean to win my sister-in-law's heart through the children; I know all their names already, and am going to attach myself with the greatest sensibility to one in particular, a young Frederic, whom I take on my lap and sigh over for his dear uncle's sake.

Poor Mainwaring! I need not tell you how much I miss him, how perpetually he is in my thoughts. I found a dismal letter from him on my arrival here, full of complaints of his wife and sister, and lamentations on the cruelty of his fate. I passed off the letter as his wife's, to the Vernons, and when I write to him it must be under cover to you.

Ever yours, S. Vernon.

VI.

Mrs. Vernon to Mr. De Courcy.

Churchhill.

Well, my dear Reginald, I have seen this dangerous creature, and must give you some description of her, though I hope you will soon be able to form your own judgment. She is really excessively pretty; however you may choose to question the allurements of a lady no longer young, I must, for my own part, declare that I have seldom seen

so lovely a woman as Lady Susan. She is delicately fair, with fine gray eyes and dark eyelashes; and from her appearance one would not suppose her more than five and twenty, though she must in fact be ten years older. I was certainly not disposed to admire her, though always hearing she was beautiful; but I cannot help feeling that she possesses an uncommon union of symmetry, brilliancy, and grace. Her address to me was so gentle, frank, and even affectionate, that, if I had not known how much she has always disliked me for marrying Mr. Vernon, and that we had never met before, I should have imagined her an attached friend. One is apt, I believe, to connect assurance of manner with coquetry, and to expect that an impudent address will naturally attend an impudent mind; at least I was myself prepared for an improper degree of confidence in Lady Susan; but her countenance is absolutely sweet, and her voice and manner winningly mild. I am sorry it is so, for what is this but deceit? Unfortunately, one knows her too well. She is clever and agreeable, has all that knowledge of the world which makes conversation easy, and talks very well with a happy command of language, which is too often used, I believe, to make black appear white. She has already almost persuaded me of her being warmly attached to her daughter, though I have been so long convinced to the contrary. She speaks of her with so much tenderness and anxiety, lamenting so bitterly the neglect of her education, which she represents however as wholly unavoidable, that I am forced to recollect how

many successive springs her ladyship spent in town, while her daughter was left in Staffordshire to the care of servants, or a governess very little better, to prevent my believing what she says.

If her manners have so great an influence on my resentful heart, you may judge how much more strongly they operate on Mr. Vernon's generous temper. I wish I could be as well satisfied as he is, that it was really her choice to leave Langford for Churchhill; and if she had not stayed there for months before she discovered that her friend's manner of living did not suit her situation or feelings, I might have believed that concern for the loss of such a husband as Mr. Vernon, to whom her own behavior was far from unexceptionable, might for a time make her wish for retirement. But I cannot forget the length of her visit to the Mainwarings; and when I reflect on the different mode of life which she led with them from that to which she must now submit, I can only suppose that the wish of establishing her reputation by following though late the path of propriety, occasioned her removal from a family where she must in reality have been particularly happy. Your friend Mr. Smith's story, however, cannot be quite correct, as she corresponds regularly with Mrs. Mainwaring. At any rate it must be exaggerated. It is scarcely possible that two men should be so grossly deceived by her at once.

Yours, etc.,

CATHERINE VERNON.

VII.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mrs. Johnson.

CHURCHHILL.

MY DEAR ALICIA, — You are very good in taking notice of Frederica, and I am grateful for it as a mark of your friendship; but as I cannot have any doubt of the warmth of your affection, I am far from exacting so heavy a sacrifice. She is a stupid girl, and has nothing to recommend her. I would not, therefore, on my account have you encumber one moment of your precious time by sending for her to Edward Street, especially as every visit is so much deducted from the grand affair of education, which I really wish to have attended to while she remains at Miss Summers'. I want her to play and sing with some portion of taste and a good deal of assurance, as she has my hand and arm and a tolerable voice. I was so much indulged in my infant years that I was never obliged to attend to anything, and consequently am without the accomplishments which are now necessary to finish a pretty woman. Not that I am an advocate for the prevailing fashion of acquiring a perfect knowledge of all languages, arts, and sciences. It is throwing time away to be mistress of French, Italian, and German: music, singing, and drawing, etc., will gain a woman some applause, but will not add one lover to her list — grace and manner, after all, are of the greatest importance. I do not mean, there

fore, that Frederica's acquirements should be more than superficial, and I flatter myself that she will not remain long enough at school to understand anything thoroughly. I hope to see her the wife of Sir James within a twelvemonth. You know on what I ground my hope, and it is certainly a good foundation, for school must be very humiliating to a girl of Frederica's age. And by the by, you had better not invite her any more on that account, as I wish her to find her situation as unpleasant as possible. I am sure of Sir James at any time, and could make him renew his application by a line. I shall trouble you meanwhile to prevent his forming any other attachment when he comes to town. Ask him to your house occasionally, and talk to him of Frederica, that he may not forget her. Upon the whole, I commend my own conduct in this affair extremely, and regard it as a very happy instance of circumspection and tenderness. Some mothers would have insisted on their daughter's accepting so good an offer on the first overture; but I could not reconcile it to myself to force Frederica into a marriage from which her heart revolted, and instead of adopting so harsh a measure merely propose to make it her own choice, by rendering her thoroughly uncomfortable till she does accept him — But enough of this tiresome girl. You may well wonder how I contrive to pass my time here, and for the first week it was insufferably dull. Now, however, we begin to mend; our party is enlarged by Mrs. Vernon's brother, a handsome young man, who promises me some amusement. There is

something about him which rather interests me, a sort of sauciness and familiarity which I shall teach him to correct. He is lively, and seems clever; and when I have inspired him with greater respect for me than his sister's kind offices have implanted, he may be an agreeable flirt. There is exquisite pleasure in subduing an insolent spirit, in making a person predetermined to dislike acknowledge one's superiority. I have disconcerted him already by my calm reserve, and it shall be my endeavor to humble the pride of these self-important De Courcys still lower, to convince Mrs. Vernon that her sisterly cautions have been bestowed in vain, and to persuade Reginald that she has scandalously belied me. This project will serve at least to amuse me, and prevent my feeling so acutely this dreadful separation from you and all whom I love.

Yours ever,

S. Vernon.

VIII.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchhill.

My dear Mother, — You must not expect Reginald back again for some time. He desires me to tell you that the present open weather induces him to accept Mr. Vernon's invitation to prolong his stay in Sussex, that they may have some hunting together. He means to send for his horses immediately, and it is impossible to say

when you may see him in Kent. I will not disguise my sentiments on this change from you, my dear mother, though I think you had better not communicate them to my father, whose excessive anxiety about Reginald would subject him to an alarm which might seriously affect his health and spirits. Lady Susan has certainly contrived, in the space of a fortnight, to make my brother like her. In short I am persuaded that his continuing here beyond the time originally fixed for his return is occasioned as much by a degree of fascination towards her, as by the wish of hunting with Mr. Vernon, and of course I cannot receive that pleasure from the length of his visit which my brother's company would otherwise give me. I am, indeed, provoked at the artifice of this unprincipled woman; what stronger proof of her dangerous abilities can be given than this perversion of Reginald's judgment, which when he entered the house was so decidedly against her? In his last letter he actually gave me some particulars of her behavior at Langford, such as he received from a gentleman who knew her perfectly well, which, if true, must raise abhorrence against her, and which Reginald himself was entirely disposed to credit. His opinion of her, I am sure, was as low as of any woman in England; and when he first came it was evident that he considered her as one entitled neither to delicacy nor respect, and that he felt she would be delighted with the attentions of any man inclined to flirt with her. Her behavior, I confess, has been calculated to do away with such an idea; I have not detected the smallest impro-

priety in it — nothing of vanity, of pretension, of levity; and she is altogether so attractive that I should not wonder at his being delighted with her, had he known nothing of her previous to this personal acquaintance; but against reason, against conviction, to be so well pleased with her, as I am sure he is, does really astonish me. His admiration was at first very strong, but no more than was natural, and I did not wonder at his being much struck by the gentleness and delicacy of her manners; but when he has mentioned her of late it has been in terms of more extraordinary praise; and yesterday he actually said that he could not be surprised at any effect produced on the heart of man by such loveliness and such abilities; and when I lamented, in reply, the badness of her disposition, he observed that whatever might have been her errors they were to be imputed to her neglected education and early marriage, and that she was altogether a wonderful woman. This tendency to excuse her conduct, or to forget it, in the warmth of admiration, vexes me; and if I did not know that Reginald is too much at home at Churchhill to need an invitation for lengthening his visit, I should regret Mr. Vernon's giving him any. Lady Susan's intentions are of course those of absolute coquetry, or a desire of universal admiration; I cannot for a moment imagine that she has anything more serious in view; but it mortifies me to see a young man of Reginald's sense duped by her at all.

I am, etc.,

CATHERINE VERNON.

IX.

Mrs. Johnson to Lady S. Vernon.

Edward Street.

My dearest Friend, — I congratulate you on Mr. De Courcy's arrival, and I advise you by all means to marry him; his father's estate is, we know, considerable, and I believe certainly entailed. Sir Reginald is very infirm, and not likely to stand in your way long. I hear the young man well spoken of; and though no one can really deserve you, my dearest Susan, Mr. De Courcy may be worth having. Mainwaring will storm of course, but you may easily pacify him; besides, the most scrupulous point of honor could not require you to wait for *his* emancipation. I have seen Sir James; he came to town for a few days last week, and called several times in Edward Street. I talked to him about you and your daughter, and he is so far from having forgotten you that I am sure he would marry either of you with pleasure. I gave him hopes of Frederica's relenting, and told him a great deal of her improvements. I scolded him for making love to Maria Mainwaring; he protested that he had been only in joke, and we both laughed heartily at her disappointment; and, in short, were very agreeable. He is as silly as ever.

Yours faithfully,

Alicia.

X.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mrs. Johnson.

CHURCHHILL.

I AM much obliged to you, my dear friend, for your advice respecting Mr. De Courcy, which I know was given with the full conviction of its expediency, though I am not quite determined on following it. I cannot easily resolve on anything so serious as marriage; especially as I am not at present in want of money, and might perhaps, till the old gentleman's death, be very little benefited by the match. It is true that I am vain enough to believe it within my reach. I have made him sensible of my power, and can now enjoy the pleasure of triumphing over a mind prepared to dislike me, and prejudiced against all my past actions. His sister, too, is, I hope, convinced how little the ungenerous representations of any one to the disadvantage of another will avail when opposed by the immediate influence of intellect and manner. I see plainly that she is uneasy at my progress in the good opinion of her brother, and conclude that nothing will be wanting on her part to counteract me; but having once made him doubt the justice of her opinion of me, I think I may defy her. It has been delightful to me to watch his advances towards intimacy, especially to observe his altered manner in consequence of my repressing by the cool dignity of my deportment his insolent approach to direct familiarity. My

conduct has been equally guarded from the first, and I never behaved less like a coquette in the whole course of my life, though perhaps my desire of dominion was never more decided. I have subdued him entirely by sentiment and serious conversation, and made him, I may venture to say, at least half in love with me, without the semblance of the most commonplace flirtation. Mrs. Vernon's consciousness of deserving every sort of revenge that it can be in my power to inflict for her ill-offices could alone enable her to perceive that I am actuated by any design in behavior so gentle and unpretending. Let her think and act as she chooses, however. I have never yet found that the advice of a sister could prevent a young man's being in love if he chose. We are advancing now to some kind of confidence, and in short are likely to be engaged in a sort of platonic friendship. On my side you may be sure of its never being more, for if I were not attached to another person as much as I can be to any one, I should make a point of not bestowing my affection on a man who had dared to think so meanly of me. Reginald has a good figure, and is not unworthy the praise you have heard given him, but is still greatly inferior to our friend at Langford. He is less polished, less insinuating than Mainwaring, and is comparatively deficient in the power of saying those delightful things which put one in good humor with oneself and all the world. He is quite agreeable enough, however, to afford me amusement, and to make many of those hours pass very pleasantly which would otherwise be spent in

endeavoring to overcome my sister-in-law's reserve, and listening to the insipid talk of her husband. Your account of Sir James is most satisfactory, and I mean to give Miss Frederica a hint of my intentions very soon.

Yours, etc.,

S. VERNON.

XI.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

CHURCHHILL.

I REALLY grow quite uneasy, my dearest mother, about Reginald, from witnessing the very rapid increase of Lady Susan's influence. They are now on terms of the most particular friendship, frequently engaged in long conversations together; and she has contrived by the most artful coquetry to subdue his judgment to her own purposes. It is impossible to see the intimacy between them so very soon established without some alarm, though I can hardly suppose that Lady Susan's plans extend to marriage. I wish you could get Reginald home again on any plausible pretence; he is not at all disposed to leave us, and I have given him as many hints of my father's precarious state of health as common decency will allow me to do in my own house. Her power over him must now be boundless, as she has entirely effaced all his former ill-opinion, and persuaded him not merely to forget but to justify her conduct. Mr. Smith's account of her proceedings at Langford, where he accused her of having made Mr. Mainwaring and a

young man engaged to Miss Mainwaring distractedly in love with her, which Reginald firmly believed when he came here, is now, he is persuaded, only a scandalous invention. He has told me so with a warmth of manner which spoke his regret at having believed the contrary himself. How sincerely do I grieve that she ever entered this house! I always looked forward to her coming with uneasiness; but very far was it from originating in anxiety for Reginald. I expected a most disagreeable companion for myself, but could not imagine that my brother would be in the smallest danger of being captivated by a woman with whose principles he was so well acquainted, and whose character he so heartily despised. If you can get him away, it will be a good thing.

Yours, etc.,

CATHERINE VERNON.

XII.

Sir Reginald de Courcy to his Son.

PARKLANDS.

I KNOW that young men in general do not admit of any inquiry even from their nearest relations into affairs of the heart, but I hope, my dear Reginald, that you will be superior to such as allow nothing for a father's anxiety, and think themselves privileged to refuse him their confidence and slight his advice. You must be sensible that as an only son, and the representative of an ancient family, your conduct in life is most interesting to your connections; and in the very important con-

cern of marriage especially, there is everything at stake — your own happiness, that of your parents, and the credit of your name. I do not suppose that you would deliberately form an absolute engagement of that nature without acquainting your mother and myself, or at least without being convinced that we should approve of your choice; but I cannot help fearing that you may be drawn in, by the lady who has lately attached you, to a marriage which the whole of your family, far and near, must highly reprobate. Lady Susan's age is itself a material objection, but her want of character is one so much more serious that the difference of even twelve years becomes in comparison of small amount. Were you not blinded by a sort of fascination, it would be ridiculous in me to repeat the instances of great misconduct on her side so very generally known.

Her neglect of her husband, her encouragement of other men, her extravagance and dissipation, were so gross and notorious that no one could be ignorant of them at the time, nor can now have forgotten them. To our family she has always been represented in softened colors by the benevolence of Mr. Charles Vernon, and yet, in spite of his generous endeavors to excuse her, we know that she did, from the most selfish motives, take all possible pains to prevent his marriage with Catherine.

My years and increasing infirmities make me very desirous of seeing you settled in the world. To the fortune of a wife, the goodness of my own will make me indifferent, but her family and

character must be equally unexceptionable. When your choice is fixed so that no objection can be made to it, then I can promise you a ready and cheerful consent; but it is my duty to oppose a match which deep art only could render possible, and must in the end make wretched. It is possible her behavior may arise only from vanity, or the wish of gaining the admiration of a man whom she must imagine to be particularly prejudiced against her; but it is more likely that she should aim at something further. She is poor, and may naturally seek an alliance which must be advantageous to herself; you know your own rights, and that it is out of my power to prevent your inheriting the family estate. My ability of distressing you during my life would be a species of revenge to which I could hardly stoop under any circumstances.

I honestly tell you my sentiments and intentions: I do not wish to work on your fears, but on your sense and affection. It would destroy every comfort of my life to know that you were married to Lady Susan Vernon: it would be the death of that honest pride with which I have hitherto considered my son; I should blush to see him, to hear of him, to think of him. I may perhaps do no good but that of relieving my own mind by this letter, but I felt it my duty to tell you that your partiality for Lady Susan is no secret to your friends, and to warn you against her. I should be glad to hear your reasons for disbelieving Mr. Smith's intelligence; you had no doubt of its authenticity a month ago. If you can give me your

assurance of having no design beyond enjoying the conversation of a clever woman for a short period, and of yielding admiration only to her beauty and abilities, without being blinded by them to her faults, you will restore me to happiness; but if you cannot do this, explain to me, at least, what has occasioned so great an alteration in your opinion of her.

I am, etc., etc.,

REGINALD DE COURCY.

XIII.

Lady De Courcy to Mrs. Vernon.

PARKLANDS.

MY DEAR CATHERINE, — Unluckily I was confined to my room when your last letter came, by a cold which affected my eyes so much as to prevent my reading it myself, so I could not refuse your father when he offered to read it to me, by which means he became acquainted, to my great vexation, with all your fears about your brother. I had intended to write to Reginald myself as soon as my eyes would let me, to point out as well as I could the danger of an intimate acquaintance with so artful a woman as Lady Susan, to a young man of his age and high expectations. I meant, moreover, to have reminded him of our being quite alone now, and very much in need of him to keep up our spirits these long winter evenings. Whether it would have done any good can never be settled now, but I am excessively vexed that Sir Reginald should know anything of the matter

which we foresaw would make him so uneasy. He caught all your fears the moment he had read your letter, and I am sure he has not had the business out of his head since. He wrote by the same post to Reginald a long letter full of it all, and particularly asking an explanation of what he may have heard from Lady Susan to contradict the late shocking reports. His answer came this morning, which I shall enclose to you, as I think you will like to see it. I wish it was more satisfactory; but it seems written with such a determination to think well of Lady Susan, that his assurances as to marriage, etc., do not set my heart at ease. I say all I can, however, to satisfy your father, and he is certainly less uneasy since Reginald's letter. How provoking it is, my dear Catherine, that this unwelcome guest of yours should not only prevent our meeting this Christmas, but be the occasion of so much vexation and trouble! Kiss the dear children for me.

Your affectionate mother,

C. DE COURCY.

XIV.

Mr. De Courcy to Sir Reginald.

CHURCHHILL.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have this moment received your letter, which has given me more astonishment than I ever felt before. I am to thank my sister, I suppose, for having represented me in such a light as to injure me in your opinion, and give you all this alarm. I know not why she

should choose to make herself and her family uneasy by apprehending an event which no one but herself, I can affirm, would ever have thought possible. To impute such a design to Lady Susan would be taking from her every claim to that excellent understanding which her bitterest enemies have never denied her; and equally low must sink my pretensions to common sense if I am suspected of matrimonial views in my behavior to her. Our difference of age must be an insuperable objection, and I entreat you, my dear father, to quiet your mind, and no longer harbor a suspicion which cannot be more injurious to your own peace than to our understandings. I can have no other view in remaining with Lady Susan, than to enjoy for a short time (as you have yourself expressed it) the conversation of a woman of high intellectual powers. If Mrs. Vernon would allow something to my affection for herself and her husband in the length of my visit, she would do more justice to us all; but my sister is unhappily prejudiced beyond the hope of conviction against Lady Susan. From an attachment to her husband, which in itself does honor to both, she cannot forgive the endeavors at preventing their union, which have been attributed to selfishness in Lady Susan; but in this case, as well as in many others, the world has most grossly injured that lady, by supposing the worst where the motives of her conduct have been doubtful. Lady Susan had heard something so materially to the disadvantage of my sister as to persuade her that the happiness of Mr. Vernon, to whom she was always much attached, would be

wholly destroyed by the marriage. And this circumstance, while it explains the true motives of Lady Susan's conduct, and removes all the blame which has been so lavished on her, may also convince us how little the general report of any one ought to be credited; since no character, however upright, can escape the malevolence of slander. If my sister, in the security of retirement, with as little opportunity as inclination to do evil, could not avoid censure, we must not rashly condemn those who, living in the world and surrounded with temptations, should be accused of errors which they are known to have the power of committing.

I blame myself severely for having so easily believed the slanderous tales invented by Charles Smith to the prejudice of Lady Susan, as I am now convinced how greatly they have traduced her. As to Mrs. Mainwaring's jealousy it was totally his own invention, and his account of her attaching Miss Mainwaring's lover was scarcely better founded. Sir James Martin had been drawn in by that young lady to pay her some attention; and as he is a man of fortune, it was easy to see her views extended to marriage. It is well known that Miss M. is absolutely on the catch for a husband, and no one therefore can pity her for losing, by the superior attractions of another woman, the chance of being able to make a worthy man completely wretched. Lady Susan was far from intending such a conquest, and on finding how warmly Miss Mainwaring resented her lover's defection, determined, in spite of Mr. and Mrs.

Mainwaring's most urgent entreaties, to leave the family. I have reason to imagine she did receive serious proposals from Sir James, but her removing to Langford immediately on the discovery of his attachment, must acquit her on that article with any mind of common candor. You will, I am sure, my dear Sir, feel the truth of this, and will hereby learn to do justice to the character of a very injured woman. I know that Lady Susan in coming to Churchhill was governed only by the most honorable and amiable intentions; her prudence and economy are exemplary, her regard for Mr. Vernon equal even to *his* deserts; and her wish of obtaining my sister's good opinion merits a better return than it has received. As a mother she is unexceptionable; her solid affection for her child is shown by placing her in hands where her education will be properly attended to; but because she has not the blind and weak partiality of most mothers, she is accused of wanting maternal tenderness. Every person of sense, however, will know how to value and commend her well-directed affection, and will join me in wishing that Frederica Vernon may prove more worthy than she has yet done of her mother's tender care. I have now, my dear father, written my real sentiments of Lady Susan; you will know from this letter how highly I admire her abilities, and esteem her character; but if you are not equally convinced by my full and solemn assurance that your fears have been most idly created, you will deeply mortify and distress me.

I am, etc., etc., R. DE COURCY.

XV.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

CHURCHHILL.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I return you Reginald's letter, and rejoice with all my heart that my father is made easy by it: tell him so, with my congratulations; but between ourselves, I must own it has only convinced me of my brother's having no present intention of marrying Lady Susan, not that he is in no danger of doing so three months hence. He gives a very plausible account of her behavior at Langford; I wish it may be true, but his intelligence must come from herself, and I am less disposed to believe it than to lament the degree of intimacy subsisting between them implied by the discussion of such a subject. I am sorry to have incurred his displeasure, but can expect nothing better while he is so very eager in Lady Susan's justification. He is very severe against me indeed, and yet I hope I have not been hasty in my judgment of her. Poor woman! though I have reasons enough for my dislike, I cannot help pitying her at present, as she is in real distress, and with too much cause. She had this morning a letter from the lady with whom she has placed her daughter, to request that Miss Vernon might be immediately removed, as she had been detected in an attempt to run away. Why, or whither she intended to go, does not appear; but as her situation seems to have been unexceptionable, it is a

sad thing, and of course highly distressing to Lady Susan. Frederica must be as much as sixteen, and ought to know better; but from what her mother insinuates, I am afraid she is a perverse girl. She has been sadly neglected, however, and her mother ought to remember it. Mr. Vernon set off for London as soon as she had determined what should be done. He is, if possible, to prevail on Miss Summers to let Frederica continue with her; and if he cannot succeed, to bring her to Churchhill for the present, till some other situation can be found for her. Her ladyship is comforting herself meanwhile by strolling along the shrubbery with Reginald, calling forth all his tender feelings, I suppose, on this distressing occasion. She has been talking a great deal about it to me. She talks vastly well; I am afraid of being ungenerous, or I should say too well to feel so very deeply; but I will not look for faults; she may be Reginald's wife! Heaven forbid it! but why should I be quicker-sighted than any one else? Mr. Vernon declares that he never saw deeper distress than hers, on the receipt of the letter; and is his judgment inferior to mine? She was very unwilling that Frederica should be allowed to come to Churchhill, and justly enough, as it seems a sort of reward to behavior deserving very differently; but it was impossible to take her anywhere else, and she is not to remain here long. "It will be absolutely necessary," said she, "as you, my dear sister, must be sensible, to treat my daughter with some severity while she is here; a most painful necessity, but I will endeavor to sub-

mit to it. I am afraid I have often been too indulgent, but my poor Frederica's temper could never bear opposition well: you must support and encourage me; you must urge the necessity of reproof if you see me too lenient." All this sounds very reasonably. Reginald is so incensed against the poor silly girl! Surely it is not to Lady Susan's credit that he should be so bitter against her daughter; his idea of her must be drawn from the mother's description. Well, whatever may be his fate, we have the comfort of knowing that we have done our utmost to save him. We must commit the event to a higher power.

Yours ever, etc.

CATHERINE VERNON.

XVI.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

CHURCHHILL.

NEVER, my dearest Alicia, was I so provoked in my life as by a letter this morning from Miss Summers. That horrid girl of mine has been trying to run away. I had not a notion of her being such a little devil before, she seemed to have all the Vernon milkiness; but on receiving the letter in which I declared my intention about Sir James, she actually attempted to elope; at least, I cannot otherwise account for her doing it. She meant, I suppose, to go to the Clarks in Staffordshire, for she has no other acquaintances. But she shall be

punished, she *shall* have him. I have sent Charles to town to make matters up if he can, for I do not by any means want her here. If Miss Summers will not keep her, you must find me out another school, unless we can get her married immediately. Miss S. writes word that she could not get the young lady to assign any cause for her extraordinary conduct, which confirms me in my own previous explanation of it. Frederica is too shy, I think, and too much in awe of me to tell tales; but if the mildness of her uncle should get anything out of her, I am not afraid. I trust I shall be able to make my story as good as hers. If I am vain of anything, it is of my eloquence. Consideration and esteem as surely follow command of language as admiration waits on beauty, and here I have opportunity enough for the exercise of my talent, as the chief of my time is spent in conversation.

Reginald is never easy unless we are by ourselves, and when the weather is tolerable, we pace the shrubbery for hours together. I like him on the whole very well; he is clever and has a good deal to say, but he is sometimes impertinent and troublesome. There is a sort of ridiculous delicacy about him which requires the fullest explanation of whatever he may have heard to my disadvantage, and is never satisfied till he thinks he has ascertained the beginning and end of everything. This is one sort of love, but I confess it does not particularly recommend itself to me. I infinitely prefer the tender and liberal spirit of Mainwaring, which, impressed with the deepest

conviction of my merit, is satisfied that whatever I do must be right; and look with a degree of contempt on the inquisitive and doubtful fancies of that heart which seems always debating on the reasonableness of its emotions. Mainwaring is indeed, beyond all compare, superior to Reginald — superior in everything but the power of being with me! Poor fellow! he is much distracted by jealousy, which I am not sorry for, as I know no better support of love. He has been teasing me to allow of his coming into this country, and lodging somewhere near *incog.*; but I forbade everything of the kind. Those women are inexcusable who forget what is due to themselves, and the opinion of the world.

Yours ever,

S. Vernon.

XVII.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchhill.

My dear Mother, — Mr. Vernon returned on Thursday night, bringing his niece with him. Lady Susan had received a line from him by that day's post, informing her that Miss Summers had absolutely refused to allow of Miss Vernon's continuance in her academy; we were therefore prepared for her arrival, and expected them impatiently the whole evening. They came while we were at tea, and I never saw any creature look so

frightened as Frederica when she entered the room. Lady Susan, who had been shedding tears before, and showing great agitation at the idea of the meeting, received her with perfect self-command, and without betraying the least tenderness of spirit. She hardly spoke to her, and on Frederica's bursting into tears as soon as we were seated, took her out of the room, and did not return for some time. When she did, her eyes looked very red, and she was as much agitated as before. We saw no more of her daughter. Poor Reginald was beyond measure concerned to see his fair friend in such distress, and watched her with so much tender solicitude, that I, who occasionally caught her observing his countenance with exultation, was quite out of patience. This pathetic representation lasted the whole evening, and so ostentatious and artful a display has entirely convinced me that she did in fact feel nothing. I am more angry with her than ever since I have seen her daughter; the poor girl looks so unhappy that my heart aches for her. Lady Susan is surely too severe, for Frederica does not seem to have the sort of temper to make severity necessary. She looks perfectly timid, dejected, and penitent. She is very pretty, though not so handsome as her mother, nor at all like her. Her complexion is delicate, but neither so fair nor so blooming as Lady Susan's, and she has quite the Vernon cast of countenance, the oval face and mild dark eyes, and there is peculiar sweetness in her look when she speaks either to her uncle or me, for as we behave kindly to her we have of course engaged her gratitude.

Her mother has insinuated that her temper is intractable, but I never saw a face less indicative of any evil disposition than hers; and from what I can see of the behavior of each to the other, the invariable severity of Lady Susan and the silent dejection of Frederica, I am led to believe as heretofore that the former has no real love for her daughter, and has never done her justice or treated her affectionately. I have not been able to have any conversation with my niece; she is shy, and I think I can see that some pains are taken to prevent her being much with me. Nothing satisfactory transpires as to her reason for running away. Her kind-hearted uncle, you may be sure, was too fearful of distressing her to ask many questions as they travelled. I wish it had been possible for me to fetch her instead of him. I think I should have discovered the truth in the course of a thirty-mile journey. The small pianoforte has been removed within these few days, at Lady Susan's request, into her dressing-room, and Frederica spends great part of the day there, practising as it is called; but I seldom hear any noise when I pass that way; what she does with herself there I do not know. There are plenty of books, but it is not every girl who has been running wild the first fifteen years of her life, that can or will read. Poor creature! the prospect from her window is not very instructive, for that room overlooks the lawn, you know, with the shrubbery on one side, where she may see her mother walking for an hour together in earnest conversation with Reginald. A girl of Frederica's age must be childish indeed, if

such things do not strike her. Is it not inexcusable to give such an example to a daughter? Yet Reginald still thinks Lady Susan the best of mothers, and still condemns Frederica as a worthless girl! He is convinced that her attempt to run away proceeded from no justifiable cause, and had no provocation. I am sure I cannot say that it had, but while Miss Summers declares that Miss Vernon showed no signs of obstinacy or perverseness during her whole stay in Wigmore Street, till she was detected in this scheme, I cannot so readily credit what Lady Susan has made him, and wants to make me believe, that it was merely an impatience of restraint and a desire of escaping from the tuition of masters which brought on the plan of an elopement. O Reginald, how is your judgment enslaved! He scarcely dares even allow her to be handsome, and when I speak of her beauty, replies only that her eyes have no brilliancy! Sometimes he is sure she is deficient in understanding, and at others that her temper only is in fault. In short, when a person is always to deceive, it is impossible to be consistent. Lady Susan finds it necessary that Frederica should be to blame, and probably has sometimes judged it expedient to excuse her of ill-nature and sometimes to lament her want of sense. Reginald is only repeating after her ladyship.

I remain, etc., etc.,

CATHERINE VERNON

XVIII.

From the same to the same.

CHURCHHILL.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I am very glad to find that my description of Frederica Vernon has interested you, for I do believe her truly deserving of your regard; and when I have communicated a notion which has recently struck me, your kind impressions in her favor will, I am sure, be heightened. I cannot help fancying that she is growing partial to my brother. I so very often see her eyes fixed on his face with a remarkable expression of pensive admiration. He is certainly very handsome; and yet more, there is an openness in his manner that must be highly prepossessing, and I am sure she feels it so. Thoughtful and pensive in general, her countenance always brightens into a smile when Reginald says anything amusing; and, let the subject be ever so serious that he may be conversing on, I am much mistaken if a syllable of his uttering escapes her. I want to make him sensible of all this, for we know the power of gratitude on such a heart as his; and could Frederica's artless affection detach him from her mother, we might bless the day which brought her to Churchhill. I think, my dear mother, you would not disapprove of her as a daughter. She is extremely young, to be sure, has had a wretched education, and a dreadful example of levity in her mother; but yet I can pronounce her disposition

to be excellent, and her natural abilities very good. Though totally without accomplishments, she is by no means so ignorant as one might expect to find her, being fond of books and spending the chief of her time in reading. Her mother leaves her more to herself than she did, and I have her with me as much as possible, and have taken great pains to overcome her timidity. We are very good friends, and though she never opens her lips before her mother, she talks enough when alone with me to make it clear that, if properly treated by Lady Susan, she would always appear to much greater advantage. There cannot be a more gentle, affectionate heart; or more obliging manners, when acting without restraint; and her little cousins are all very fond of her.

Your affectionate daughter,

C. Vernon.

XIX.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

Churchhill.

You will be eager, I know, to hear something further of Frederica, and perhaps may think me negligent for not writing before. She arrived with her uncle last Thursday fortnight, when, of course, I lost no time in demanding the cause of her behavior; and soon found myself to have been perfectly right in attributing it to my own letter. The prospect of it frightened her so thoroughly that, with a mixture of true girlish perverseness and folly, she resolved on getting out of the house

and proceeding directly by the stage to her friends, the Clarkes; and had really got as far as the length of two streets in her journey when she was fortunately missed, pursued, and overtaken. Such was the first distinguished exploit of Miss Frederica Vernon; and if we consider that it was achieved at the tender age of sixteen, we shall have room for the most flattering prognostics of her future renown. I am excessively provoked, however, at the parade of propriety which prevented Miss Summers from keeping the girl; and it seems so extraordinary a piece of nicety, considering my daughter's family connections, that I can only suppose the lady to be governed by the fear of never getting her money. Be that as it may, however, Frederica is returned on my hands; and having nothing else to employ her, is busy in pursuing the plan of romance begun at Langford. She is actually falling in love with Reginald de Courcy! To disobey her mother by refusing an unexceptionable offer is not enough; her affections must also be given without her mother's approbation. I never saw a girl of her age bid fairer to be the sport of mankind. Her feelings are tolerably acute, and she is so charmingly artless in their display as to afford the most reasonable hope of her being ridiculous, and despised by every man who sees her.

Artlessness will never do in love matters; and that girl is born a simpleton who has it either by nature or affectation. I am not yet certain that Reginald sees what she is about, nor is it of much consequence. She is now an object of indifference

to him, and she would be one of contempt were he to understand her emotions. Her beauty is much admired by the Vernons, but it has no effect on him. She is in high favor with her aunt altogether, because she is so little like myself, of course. She is exactly the companion for Mrs. Vernon, who dearly loves to be first, and to have all the sense and all the wit of the conversation to herself: Frederica will never eclipse her. When she first came I was at some pains to prevent her seeing much of her aunt; but I have relaxed, as I believe I may depend on her observing the rules I have laid down for their discourse. But do not imagine that with all this lenity I have for a moment given up my plan of her marriage. No; I am unalterably fixed on this point, though I have not yet quite decided on the manner of bringing it about. I should not choose to have the business brought on here, and canvassed by the wise heads of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon; and I cannot just now afford to go to town. Miss Frederica must therefore wait a little.

Yours ever, S. Vernon.

XX.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

Churchhill.

We have a very unexpected guest with us at present, my dear mother: he arrived yesterday. I heard a carriage at the door, as I was sitting with my children while they dined; and supposing I

should be wanted, left the nursery soon afterwards, and was half-way downstairs, when Frederica, as pale as ashes, came running up, and rushed by me into her own room. I instantly followed, and asked her what was the matter. "Oh!" said she, "he is come — Sir James is come, and what shall I do!" This was no explanation; I begged her to tell me what she meant. At that moment we were interrupted by a knock at the door: it was Reginald, who came, by Lady Susan's direction, to call Frederica down. "It is Mr. De Courcy!" said she, coloring violently. "Mamma has sent for me; I must go." We all three went down together; and I saw my brother examining the terrified face of Frederica with surprise. In the breakfast-room we found Lady Susan, and a young man of gentlemanlike appearance, whom she introduced by the name of Sir James Martin — the very person, as you may remember, whom it was said she had been at pains to detach from Miss Mainwaring; but the conquest, it seems, was not designed for herself, or she has since transferred it to her daughter; for Sir James is now desperately in love with Frederica, and with full encouragement from mamma. The poor girl, however, I am sure, dislikes him; and though his person and address are very well, he appears, both to Mr. Vernon and me, a very weak young man. Frederica looked so shy, so confused, when we entered the room, that I felt for her exceedingly. Lady Susan behaved with great attention to her visitor; and yet I thought I could perceive that she had no particular pleasure in seeing him. Sir James talked a great

deal, and made many civil excuses to me for the liberty he had taken in coming to Churchhill — mixing more frequent laughter with his discourse than the subject required — said many things over and over again, and told Lady Susan three times that he had seen Mrs. Johnson a few evenings before. He now and then addressed Frederica, but more frequently her mother. The poor girl sat all this time without opening her lips — her eyes cast down, and her color varying every instant; while Reginald observed all that passed in perfect silence. At length Lady Susan, weary, I believe, of her situation, proposed walking; and we left the two gentlemen together, to put on our pelisses. As we went upstairs Lady Susan begged permission to attend me for a few moments in my dressing-room, as she was anxious to speak with me in private. I led her thither accordingly, and as soon as the door was closed, she said: "I was never more surprised in my life than by Sir James's arrival, and the suddenness of it requires some apology to you, my dear sister; though to me, as a mother, it is highly flattering. He is so extremely attached to my daughter that he could not exist longer without seeing her. Sir James is a young man of an amiable disposition and excellent character; a little too much of the rattle, perhaps, but a year or two will rectify that: and he is in other respects so very eligible a match for Frederica, that I have always observed his attachment with the greatest pleasure; and am persuaded that you and my brother will give the alliance your hearty approbation. I have never before mentioned

the likelihood of its taking place to any one, because I thought that whilst Frederica continued at school it had better not be known to exist; but now, as I am convinced that Frederica is too old ever to submit to school confinement, and have therefore begun to consider her union with Sir James as not very distant, I had intended within a few days to acquaint yourself and Mr. Vernon with the whole business. I am sure, my dear sister, you will excuse my remaining silent so long, and agree with me that such circumstances, while they continue from any cause in suspense, cannot be too cautiously concealed. When you have the happiness of bestowing your sweet little Catherine, some years hence, on a man who in connection and character is alike unexceptionable, you will know what I feel now; though, thank Heaven, you cannot have all my reasons for rejoicing in such an event. Catherine will be amply provided for, and not, like my Frederica, indebted to a fortunate establishment for the comforts of life." She concluded by demanding my congratulations. I gave them somewhat awkwardly, I believe; for, in fact, the sudden disclosure of so important a matter took from me the power of speaking with any clearness. She thanked me, however, most affectionately, for my kind concern in the welfare of herself and daughter; and then said: "I am not apt to deal in professions, my dear Mrs. Vernon, and I never had the convenient talent of affecting sensations foreign to my heart; and therefore I trust you will believe me when I declare that much as I had heard in your praise before I knew

you, I had no idea that I should ever love you as I now do; and I must further say that your friendship towards me is more particularly gratifying because I have reason to believe that some attempts were made to prejudice you against me. I only wish that they, whoever they are to whom I am indebted for such kind intentions, could see the terms on which we now are together, and understand the real affection we feel for each other; but I will not detain you any longer. God bless you for your goodness to me and my girl, and continue to you all your present happiness." What can one say of such a woman, my dear mother? Such earnestness, such solemnity of expression! and yet I cannot help suspecting the truth of everything she says. As for Reginald, I believe he does not know what to make of the matter. When Sir James came, he appeared all astonishment and perplexity; the folly of the young man and the confusion of Frederica entirely engrossed him; and though a little private discourse with Lady Susan has since had its effect, he is still hurt, I am sure, at her allowing of such a man's attentions to her daughter. Sir James invited himself with great composure to remain here a few days — hoped we would not think it odd, was aware of its being very impertinent, but he took the liberty of a relation; and concluded by wishing, with a laugh, that he might be really one very soon. Even Lady Susan seemed a little disconcerted by this forwardness; in her heart I am persuaded she sincerely wished him gone. But something must be done for this poor girl, if her feelings are such as both I

and her uncle believe them to be. She must not be sacrificed to policy or ambition, and she must not be left to suffer from the dread of it. The girl whose heart can distinguish Reginald de Courcy deserves, however he may slight her, a better fate than to be Sir James Martin's wife. As soon as I can get her alone, I will discover the real truth; but she seems to wish to avoid me. I hope this does not proceed from anything wrong, and that I shall not find out I have thought too well of her. Her behavior to Sir James certainly speaks the greatest consciousness and embarrassment, but I see nothing in it more like encouragement. Adieu, my dear mother.

Yours, etc.

C. Vernon.

XXI.

Miss Vernon to Mr. De Courcy.

Sir, — I hope you will excuse this liberty; I am forced upon it by the greatest distress, or I should be ashamed to trouble you. I am very miserable about Sir James Martin, and have no other way in the world of helping myself but by writing to you, for I am forbidden even speaking to my uncle and aunt on the subject; and this being the case, I am afraid my applying to you will appear no better than equivocation, and as if I attended to the letter and not the spirit of mamma's commands. But if you do not take my part and persuade her to break it off, I shall be half distracted, for I cannot bear

him. No human being but you could have any chance of prevailing with her. If you will, therefore, have the unspeakably great kindness of taking my part with her, and persuading her to send Sir James away, I shall be more obliged to you than it is possible for me to express. I always disliked him from the first: it is not a sudden fancy, I assure you, sir; I always thought him silly and impertinent and disagreeable, and now he is grown worse than ever. I would rather work for my bread than marry him. I do not know how to apologize enough for this letter; I know it is taking so great a liberty. I am aware how dreadfully angry it will make mamma, but I remember the risk.

I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

F. S. V.

XXII.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

CHURCHHILL.

THIS is insufferable! My dearest friend, I was never so enraged before, and must relieve myself by writing to you, who I know will enter into all my feelings. Who should come on Tuesday but Sir James Martin! Guess my astonishment and vexation — for, as you well know, I never wished him to be seen at Churchhill. What a pity that you should not have known his intentions! Not content with coming, he actually invited himself to remain here a few days. I could have poisoned him! I made the best of it, however, and told my

story with great success to Mrs. Vernon, who, whatever might be her real sentiments, said nothing in opposition to mine. I made a point also of Frederica's behaving civilly to Sir James, and gave her to understand that I was absolutely determined on her marrying him. She said something of her misery, but that was all. I have for some time been more particularly resolved on the match from seeing the rapid increase of her affection for Reginald, and from not feeling secure that a knowledge of such affection might not in the end awaken a return. Contemptible as a regard founded only on compassion must make them both in my eyes, I felt by no means assured that such might not be the consequence. It is true that Reginald had not in any degree grown cool towards me; but yet he has lately mentioned Frederica spontaneously and unnecessarily, and once said something in praise of her person. He was all astonishment at the appearance of my visitor, and at first observed Sir James with an attention which I was pleased to see not unmixed with jealousy; but unluckily it was impossible for me really to torment him, as Sir James, though extremely gallant to me, very soon made the whole party understand that his heart was devoted to my daughter. I had no great difficulty in convincing De Courcy, when we were alone, that I was perfectly justified, all things considered, in desiring the match; and the whole business seemed most comfortably arranged. They could none of them help perceiving that Sir James was no Solomon; but I had positively forbidden Frederica complaining to Charles

Vernon or his wife, and they had therefore no pretence for interference; though my impertinent sister, I believe, wanted only opportunity for doing so. Everything, however, was going on calmly and quietly; and though I counted the hours of Sir James's stay, my mind was entirely satisfied with the posture of affairs. Guess, then, what I must feel at the sudden disturbance of all my schemes; and that, too, from a quarter where I had least reason to expect it. Reginald came this morning into my dressing-room with a very unusual solemnity of countenance, and after some preface informed me in so many words that he wished to reason with me on the impropriety and unkindness of allowing Sir James Martin to address my daughter contrary to her inclinations. I was all amazement. When I found that he was not to be laughed out of his design, I calmly begged an explanation, and desired to know by what he was impelled, and by whom commissioned to reprimand me. He then told me, mixing in his speech a few insolent compliments and ill-timed expressions of tenderness, to which I listened with perfect indifference, that my daughter had acquainted him with some circumstances concerning herself, Sir James, and me which had given him great uneasiness. In short, I found that she had in the first place actually written to him to request his interference, and that, on receiving her letter, he had conversed with her on the subject of it, in order to understand the particulars, and to assure himself of her real wishes. I have not a doubt but that the girl took this opportunity of making downright love to him. I am

convinced of it by the manner in which he spoke of her. Much good may such love do him! I shall ever despise the man who can be gratified by the passion which he never wished to inspire, nor solicited the avowal of. I shall always detest them both. He can have no true regard for me, or he would not have listened to her; and she, with her little rebellious heart and indelicate feelings, to throw herself into the protection of a young man with whom she has scarcely ever exchanged two words before! I am equally confounded at her impudence and his credulity. How dared he believe what she told him in my disfavor! Ought he not to have felt assured that I must have unanswerable motives for all that I had done? Where was his reliance on my sense and goodness then? Where the resentment which true love would have dictated against the person defaming me, —that person, too, a chit, a child, without talent or education, whom he had been always taught to despise? I was calm for some time; but the greatest degree of forbearance may be overcome, and I hope I was afterwards sufficiently keen. He endeavored, long endeavored, to soften my resentment; but that woman is a fool indeed who, while insulted by accusation, can be worked on by compliments. At length he left me, as deeply provoked as myself; and he showed his anger more. I was quite cool, but he gave way to the most violent indignation; I may therefore expect it will the sooner subside, and perhaps his may be vanished forever, while mine will be found still fresh and implacable. He is now shut up in his apartment, whither I heard

him go on leaving mine. How unpleasant, one would think, must be his reflections! but some people's feelings are incomprehensible. I have not yet tranquillized myself enough to see Frederica. She shall not soon forget the occurrences of this day; she shall find that she has poured forth her tender tale of love in vain, and exposed herself forever to the contempt of the whole world, and the severest resentment of her injured mother.

Your affectionate S. VERNON.

XXIII.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

CHURCHHILL.

LET me congratulate you, my dearest mother! The affair which has given us so much anxiety is drawing to a happy conclusion. Our prospect is most delightful; and since matters have now taken so favorable a turn, I am quite sorry that I ever imparted my apprehensions to you; for the pleasure of learning that the danger is over is perhaps dearly purchased by all that you have previously suffered. I am so much agitated by delight that I can scarcely hold a pen; but am determined to send you a few short lines by James, that you may have some explanation of what must so greatly astonish you as that Reginald should be returning to Parklands. I was sitting about half an hour ago with Sir James in the breakfast-parlor, when my brother called me out of the room. I instantly saw that something was the matter; his complexion was raised, and he spoke with great emotion; you

know his eager manner, my dear mother, when his mind is interested. "Catherine," said he, "I am going home to-day; I am sorry to leave you, but I must go: it is a great while since I have seen my father and mother. I am going to send James forward with my hunters immediately; if you have any letter, therefore, he can take it. I shall not be at home myself till Wednesday or Thursday, as I shall go through London, where I have business; but before I leave you," he continued, speaking in a lower tone, and with still greater energy, "I must warn you of one thing, — do not let Frederica Vernon be made unhappy by that Martin. He wants to marry her; her mother promotes the match, but she cannot endure the idea of it. Be assured that I speak from the fullest conviction of the truth of what I say; I know that Frederica is made wretched by Sir James's continuing here. She is a sweet girl, and deserves a better fate. Send him away immediately; he is only a fool: but what her mother can mean, Heaven only knows! Good-by," he added, shaking my hand with earnestness, "I do not know when you will see me again; but remember what I tell you of Frederica; you must make it your business to see justice done her. She is an amiable girl, and has a very superior mind to what we have given her credit for." He then left me, and ran upstairs. I would not try to stop him, for I know what his feelings must be. The nature of mine, as I listened to him, I need not attempt to describe; for a minute or two I remained in the same spot, overpowered by wonder of a most agreeable sort indeed; yet it required

some consideration to be tranquilly happy. In about ten minutes after my return to the parlor Lady Susan entered the room. I concluded, of course, that she and Reginald had been quarrelling, and looked with anxious curiosity for a confirmation of my belief in her face. Mistress of deceit, however, she appeared perfectly unconcerned, and after chatting on indifferent subjects for a short time, said to me, "I find from Wilson that we are going to lose Mr. De Courcy, — is it true that he leaves Churchhill this morning?" I replied that it was. "He told us nothing of all this last night," said she, laughing, "or even this morning at breakfast; but perhaps he did not know it himself. Young men are often hasty in their resolutions, and not more sudden in forming than unsteady in keeping them. I should not be surprised if he were to change his mind at last, and not go." She soon afterwards left the room. I trust, however, my dear mother, that we have no reason to fear an alteration of his present plan; things have gone too far. They must have quarrelled, and about Frederica too. Her calmness astonishes me. What delight will be yours in seeing him again, in seeing him still worthy your esteem, still capable of forming your happiness! When I next write I shall be able to tell you that Sir James is gone, Lady Susan vanquished, and Frederica at peace. We have much to do, but it shall be done. I am all impatience to hear how this astonishing change was effected. I finish as I began with the warmest congratulations.

Yours ever, etc., CATH. VERNON

XXIV.

From the same to the same.

CHURCHHILL.

LITTLE did I imagine, my dear mother, when I sent off my last letter, that the delightful perturbation of spirits I was then in would undergo so speedy, so melancholy a reverse. I never can sufficiently regret that I wrote to you at all. Yet who could have foreseen what has happened? My dear mother, every hope which made me so happy only two hours ago has vanished. The quarrel between Lady Susan and Reginald is made up, and we are all as we were before. One point only is gained. Sir James Martin is dismissed. What are we now to look forward to? I am indeed disappointed; Reginald was all but gone, his horse was ordered and all but brought to the door; who would not have felt safe? For half an hour I was in momentary expectation of his departure. After I had sent off my letter to you, I went to Mr. Vernon, and sat with him in his room talking over the whole matter, and then determined to look for Frederica, whom I had not seen since breakfast. I met her on the stairs, and saw that she was crying. "My dear aunt," said she, "he is going — Mr. De Courcy is going, and it is all my fault. I am afraid you will be very angry with me, but indeed I had no idea it would end so." "My love," I replied, "do not think it necessary to apologize to me on that account. I shall feel myself under an obligation to any one who is the means of sending

my brother home, because," recollecting myself, "I know my father wants very much to see him. But what is it you have done to occasion all this?" She blushed deeply as she answered: "I was so unhappy about Sir James that I could not help — I have done something very wrong, I know; but you have not an idea of the misery I have been in: and mamma had ordered me never to speak to you or my uncle about it, and —" "You therefore spoke to my brother to engage his interference," said I, to save her the explanation. "No; but I wrote to him, — I did indeed, I got up this morning before it was light, and was two hours about it; and when my letter was done I thought I never should have courage to give it. After breakfast, however, as I was going to my room, I met him in the passage, and then, as I knew that everything must depend on that moment, I forced myself to give it. He was so good as to take it immediately. I dared not look at him, and ran away directly. I was in such a fright I could hardly breathe. My dear aunt, you do not know how miserable I have been." "Frederica," said I, "you ought to have told me all your distresses. You would have found in me a friend always ready to assist you. Do you think that your uncle or I should not have espoused your cause as warmly as my brother?" "Indeed, I did not doubt your kindness," said she, coloring again, "but I thought Mr. De Courcy could do anything with my mother; but I was mistaken: they have had a dreadful quarrel about it, and he is going away. Mamma will never forgive me, and I shall be worse off than

ever." "No, you shall not," I replied; "in such a point as this your mother's prohibition ought not to have prevented your speaking to me on the subject. She has no right to make you unhappy, and she shall not do it. Your applying, however, to Reginald can be productive only of good to all parties. I believe it is best as it is. Depend upon it that you shall not be made unhappy any longer." At that moment how great was my astonishment at seeing Reginald come out of Lady Susan's dressing-room. My heart misgave me instantly. His confusion at seeing me was very evident. Frederica immediately disappeared. "Are you going?" I said; "you will find Mr. Vernon in his own room." "No, Catherine," he replied, "I am not going. Will you let me speak to you a moment?" We went into my room. "I find," he continued, his confusion increasing as he spoke, "that I have been acting with my usual foolish impetuosity. I have entirely misunderstood Lady Susan, and was on the point of leaving the house under a false impression of her conduct. There has been some very great mistake: we have been all mistaken, I fancy. Frederica does not know her mother. Lady Susan means nothing but her good, but she will not make a friend of her. Lady Susan does not always know, therefore, what will make her daughter happy. Besides, I could have no right to interfere. Miss Vernon was mistaken in applying to me. In short, Catherine, everything has gone wrong, but it is now all happily settled. Lady Susan, I believe, wishes to speak to you about it, if you are at leisure." "Cer-

tainly," I replied, deeply sighing at the recital of so lame a story. I made no comments, however, for words would have been vain.

Reginald was glad to get away; and I went to Lady Susan, curious, indeed, to hear her account of it. "Did I not tell you," said she, with a smile, "that your brother would not leave us after all?" "You did, indeed," replied I, very gravely; "but I flattered myself you would be mistaken." "I should not have hazarded such an opinion," returned she, "if it had not at that moment occurred to me that his resolution of going might be occasioned by a conversation in which we had been this morning engaged, and which had ended very much to his dissatisfaction, from our not rightly understanding each other's meaning. This idea struck me at the moment, and I instantly determined that an accidental dispute, in which I might probably be as much to blame as himself, should not deprive you of your brother. If you remember, I left the room almost immediately. I was resolved to lose no time in clearing up those mistakes as far as I could. The case was this — Frederica had set herself violently against marrying Sir James." "And can your ladyship wonder that she should?" cried I, with some warmth; "Frederica has an excellent understanding, and Sir James has none." "I am at least very far from regretting it, my dear sister," said she; "on the contrary, I am grateful for so favorable a sign of my daughter's sense. Sir James is certainly below par (his boyish manners make him appear worse); and had Frederica possessed the penetra-

tion and the abilities which I could have wished in my daughter, or had I even known her to possess as much as she does, I should not have been anxious for the match." "It is odd that you should alone be ignorant of your daughter's sense!" "Frederica never does justice to herself; her manners are shy and childish, and besides she is afraid of me. During her poor father's life she was a spoilt child; the severity which it has since been necessary for me to show has alienated her affection; neither has she any of that brilliancy of intellect, that genius or vigor of mind which will force itself forward." "Say rather that she has been unfortunate in her education!" "Heaven knows, my dearest Mrs. Vernon, how fully I am aware of that; but I would wish to forget every circumstance that might throw blame on the memory of one whose name is sacred with me." Here she pretended to cry; I was out of patience with her. "But what," said I, "was your ladyship going to tell me about your disagreement with my brother?" "It originated in an action of my daughter's which equally marks her want of judgment and the unfortunate dread of me I have been mentioning, — she wrote to Mr. De Courcy." "I know she did; you had forbidden her speaking to Mr. Vernon or to me on the cause of her distress; what could she do, therefore, but apply to my brother?" "Good God!" she exclaimed, "what an opinion you must have of me! Can you possibly suppose that I was aware of her unhappiness, that it was my object to make my own child miserable, and that I had forbidden her speaking to you

on the subject from fear of your interrupting the diabolical scheme? Do you think me destitute of every honest, every natural feeling? Am I capable of consigning her to everlasting misery whose welfare it is my first earthly duty to promote? The idea is horrible!" "What, then, was your intention when you insisted on her silence?" "Of what use, my dear sister, could be any application to you, however the affair might stand? Why should I subject you to entreaties which I refused to attend to myself? Neither for your sake nor for hers nor for my own, could such a thing be desirable. When my own resolution was taken, I could not wish for the interference, however friendly, of another person. I was mistaken, it is true, but I believed myself right." "But what was this mistake to which your ladyship so often alludes? from whence arose so astonishing a misconception of your daughter's feelings? Did you not know that she disliked Sir James?" "I knew that he was not absolutely the man she would have chosen, but I was persuaded that her objections to him did not arise from any perception of his deficiency. You must not question me, however, my dear sister, too minutely on this point," continued she, taking me affectionately by the hand; "I honestly own that there is something to conceal. Frederica makes me very unhappy! Her applying to Mr. De Courcy hurt me particularly." "What is it you mean to infer," said I, "by this appearance of mystery? If you think your daughter at all attached to Reginald, her objecting to Sir James could not less deserve to be attended to

than if the cause of her objecting had been a consciousness of his folly; and why should your ladyship, at any rate, quarrel with my brother for an interference which you must know it is not in his nature to refuse when urged in such a manner?"

"His disposition, you know, is warm, and he came to expostulate with me; his compassion all alive for this ill-used girl, this heroine in distress! We misunderstood each other: he believed me more to blame than I really was; I considered his interference less excusable than I now find it. I have a real regard for him, and was beyond expression mortified to find it, as I thought, so ill bestowed. We were both warm, and of course both to blame. His resolution of leaving Churchhill is consistent with his general eagerness. When I understood his intention, however, and at the same time began to think that we had been perhaps equally mistaken in each other's meaning, I resolved to have an explanation before it was too late. For any member of your family I must always feel a degree of affection, and I own it would have sensibly hurt me if my acquaintance with Mr. De Courcy had ended so gloomily. I have now only to say, further, that as I am convinced of Frederica's having a reasonable dislike to Sir James, I shall instantly inform him that he must give up all hope of her. I reproach myself for having even, though innocently, made her unhappy on that score. She shall have all the retribution in my power to make; if she value her own happiness as much as I do, if she judge wisely, and command herself as she ought, she may now

be easy. Excuse me, my dearest sister, for thus trespassing on your time, but I owe it to my own character; and after this explanation I trust I am in no danger of sinking in your opinion." I could have said, "Not much, indeed!" but I left her almost in silence. It was the greatest stretch of forbearance I could practise. I could not have stopped myself had I begun. Her assurance! her deceit! but I will not allow myself to dwell on them; they will strike you sufficiently. My heart sickens within me. As soon as I was tolerably composed I returned to the parlor. Sir James's carriage was at the door, and he, merry as usual, soon afterwards took his leave. How easily does her ladyship encourage or dismiss a lover! In spite of this release, Frederica still looks unhappy: still fearful, perhaps, of her mother's anger; and though dreading my brother's departure, jealous, it may be, of his staying. I see how closely she observes him and Lady Susan, poor girl! I have now no hope for her. There is not a chance of her affection being returned. He thinks very differently of her from what he used to do; he does her some justice, but his reconciliation with her mother precludes every dearer hope. Prepare, my dear mother, for the worst! The probability of their marrying is surely heightened! He is more securely hers than ever. When that wretched event takes place, Frederica must belong wholly to us. I am thankful that my last letter will precede this by so little, as every moment that you can be saved from feeling a joy which leads only to disappointment is of consequence.

Yours ever, etc., CATHERINE VERNON

XXV.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

CHURCHHILL.

I CALL on you, dear Alicia, for congratulations: I am my own self, gay and triumphant! When I wrote to you the other day I was, in truth, in high irritation, and with ample cause. Nay, I know not whether I ought to be quite tranquil now, for I have had more trouble in restoring peace than I ever intended to submit to, — a spirit, too, resulting from a fancied sense of superior integrity, which is peculiarly insolent! I shall not easily forgive him, I assure you. He was actually on the point of leaving Churchhill! I had scarcely concluded my last, when Wilson brought me word of it. I found, therefore, that something must be done; for I did not choose to leave my character at the mercy of a man whose passions are so violent and so revengeful. It would have been trifling with my reputation to allow of his departing with such an impression in my disfavor; in this light, condescension was necessary. I sent Wilson to say that I desired to speak with him before he went; he came immediately. The angry emotions which had marked every feature when we last parted were partially subdued. He seemed astonished at the summons, and looked as if half wishing and half fearing to be softened by what I might say. If my countenance expressed what I aimed at, it was composed and dignified, and yet

with a degree of pensiveness which might convince him that I was not quite happy. "I beg your pardon, sir, for the liberty I have taken in sending for you," said I; "but as I have just learnt your intention of leaving this place to-day, I feel it my duty to entreat that you will not on my account shorten your visit here even an hour. I am perfectly aware that after what has passed between us it would ill suit the feelings of either to remain longer in the same house: so very great, so total a change from the intimacy of friendship must render any future intercourse the severest punishment; and your resolution of quitting Churchhill is undoubtedly in unison with our situation, and with those lively feelings which I know you to possess. But at the same time it is not for me to suffer such a sacrifice as it must be to leave relations to whom you are so much attached and are so dear. My remaining here cannot give that pleasure to Mr. and Mrs. Vernon which your society must; and my visit has already perhaps been too long. My removal, therefore, which must at any rate take place soon, may with perfect convenience be hastened; and I make it my particular request that I may not in any way be instrumental in separating a family so affectionately attached to each other. Where I go is of no consequence to any one; of very little to myself; but you are of importance to all your connections." Here I concluded, and I hope you will be satisfied with my speech. Its effect on Reginald justifies some portion of vanity, for it was no less favorable than instantaneous. Oh, how delightful it was to watch

the variations of his countenance while I spoke, — to see the struggle between returning tenderness and the remains of displeasure! There is something agreeable in feelings so easily worked on; not that I envy him their possession, nor would, for the world, have such myself; but they are very convenient when one wishes to influence the passions of another. And yet this Reginald, whom a very few words from me softened at once into the utmost submission, and rendered more tractable, more attached, more devoted than ever, would have left me in the first angry swelling of his proud heart without deigning to seek an explanation. Humbled as he now is, I cannot forgive him such an instance of pride, and am doubtful whether I ought not to punish him by dismissing him at once after this reconciliation, or by marrying and teasing him forever. But these measures are each too violent to be adopted without some deliberation; at present my thoughts are fluctuating between various schemes. I have many things to compass: I must punish Frederica, and pretty severely too, for her application to Reginald; I must punish him for receiving it so favorably, and for the rest of his conduct. I must torment my sister-in-law for the insolent triumph of her look and manner since Sir James has been dismissed; for in reconciling Reginald to me, I was not able to save that ill-fated young man; and I must make myself amends for the humiliation to which I have stooped within these few days. To effect all this I have various plans. I have also an idea of being soon in town; and whatever may be my determination

as to the rest, I shall probably put that project in execution; for London will be always the fairest field of action, however my views may be directed; and at any rate I shall there be rewarded by your society, and a little dissipation, for a ten weeks' penance at Churchhill. I believe I owe it to my character to complete the match between my daughter and Sir James after having so long intended it. Let me know your opinion on this point. Flexibility of mind, a disposition easily biased by others, is an attribute which you know I am not very desirous of obtaining; nor has Frederica any claim to the indulgence of her notions at the expense of her mother's inclinations. Her idle love for Reginald, too! It is surely my duty to discourage such romantic nonsense. All things considered, therefore, it seems incumbent on me to take her to town and marry her immediately to Sir James. When my own will is effected contrary to his, I shall have some credit in being on good terms with Reginald, which at present, in fact, I have not; for though he is still in my power, I have given up the very article by which our quarrel was produced, and at best the honor of victory is doubtful. Send me your opinion on all these matters, my dear Alicia, and let me know whether you can get lodgings to suit me within a short distance of you.

Your most attached

S. Vernon

XXVI.

Mrs. Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward Street.

I am gratified by your reference, and this is my advice: that you come to town yourself, without loss of time, but that you leave Frederica behind. It would surely be much more to the purpose to get yourself well established by marrying Mr. De Courcy, than to irritate him and the rest of his family by making her marry Sir James. You should think more of yourself and less of your daughter. She is not of a disposition to do you credit in the world, and seems precisely in her proper place at Churchhill, with the Vernons. But you are fitted for society, and it is shameful to have you exiled from it. Leave Frederica, therefore, to punish herself for the plague she has given you, by indulging that romantic tenderheartedness which will always insure her misery enough, and come to London as soon as you can. I have another reason for urging this: Mainwaring came to town last week, and has contrived, in spite of Mr. Johnson, to make opportunities of seeing me. He is absolutely miserable about you, and jealous to such a degree of De Courcy that it would be highly unadvisable for them to meet at present. And yet, if you do not allow him to see you here, I cannot answer for his not committing some great imprudence, — such as going to Churchhill, for instance, which would be dreadful!

Besides, if you take my advice, and resolve to marry De Courcy, it will be indispensably necessary to you to get Mainwaring out of the way; and you only can have influence enough to send him back to his wife. I have still another motive for your coming: Mr. Johnson leaves London next Tuesday; he is going for his health to Bath, where, if the waters are favorable to his constitution and my wishes, he will be laid up with the gout many weeks. During his absence we shall be able to choose our own society, and to have true enjoyment. I would ask you to Edward Street, but that once he forced from me a kind of promise never to invite you to my house; nothing but my being in the utmost distress for money should have extorted it from me. I can get you, however, a nice drawing-room apartment in Upper Seymour Street, and we may be always together there or here; for I consider my promise to Mr. Johnson as comprehending only (at least in his absence) your not sleeping in the house. Poor Mainwaring gives me such histories of his wife's jealousy. Silly woman to expect constancy from so charming a man! but she always was silly — intolerably so in marrying him at all, she the heiress of a large fortune and he without a shilling: one title, I know, she might have had, besides baronets. Her folly in forming the connection was so great that though Mr. Johnson was her guardian, and I do not in general share his feelings, I never can forgive her.

Adieu. Yours ever,

ALICIA.

XXVII.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

CHURCHHILL.

THIS letter, my dear mother, will be brought you by Reginald. His long visit is about to be concluded at last, but I fear the separation takes place too late to do us any good. She is going to London to see her particular friend, Mrs. Johnson. It was at first her intention that Frederica should accompany her, for the benefit of masters, but we overruled her there. Frederica was wretched in the idea of going, and I could not bear to have her at the mercy of her mother; not all the masters in London could compensate for the ruin of her comfort. I should have feared, too, for her health, and for everything but her principles, — there I believe she is not to be injured by her mother, or her mother's friends; but with those friends she must have mixed (a very bad set, I doubt not), or have been left in total solitude, and I can hardly tell which would have been worse for her. If she is with her mother, moreover, she must, alas! in all probability be with Reginald, and that would be the greatest evil of all. Here we shall in time be in peace; and our regular employments, our books and conversations, with exercise, the children, and every domestic pleasure in my power to procure her, will, I trust, gradually overcome this youthful attachment. I should not have a doubt of it were she slighted for

any other woman in the world than her own mother. How long Lady Susan will be in town, or whether she returns here again, I know not. I could not be cordial in my invitation; but if she chooses to come, no want of cordiality on my part will keep her away. I could not help asking Reginald if he intended being in London this winter, as soon as I found her ladyship's steps would be bent thither; and though he professed himself quite undetermined, there was something in his look and voice as he spoke which contradicted his words. I have done with lamentation; I look upon the event as so far decided that I resign myself to it in despair. If he leaves you soon for London, everything will be concluded.

Your affectionate, etc.,

C. Vernon.

XXVIII.

Mrs. Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward Street.

My dearest Friend, — I write in the greatest distress; the most unfortunate event has just taken place. Mr. Johnson has hit on the most effectual manner of plaguing us all. He had heard, I imagine, by some means or other, that you were soon to be in London, and immediately contrived to have such an attack of the gout as must at least delay his journey to Bath, if not wholly prevent it. I am persuaded the gout is brought

on or kept off at pleasure; it was the same when I wanted to join the Hamiltons to the Lakes; and three years ago, when I had a fancy for Bath, nothing could induce him to have a gouty symptom.

I am pleased to find that my letter had so much effect on you, and that De Courcy is certainly your own. Let me hear from you as soon as you arrive, and in particular tell me what you mean to do with Mainwaring. It is impossible to say when I shall be able to come to you; my confinement must be great. It is such an abominable trick to be ill here instead of at Bath that I can scarcely command myself at all. At Bath his old aunts would have nursed him, but here it all falls upon me; and he bears pain with such patience that I have not the common excuse for losing my temper.

Yours ever,

ALICIA.

XXIX.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mrs. Johnson.

UPPER SEYMOUR STREET.

MY DEAR ALICIA, — There needed not this last fit of the gout to make me detest Mr. Johnson, but now the extent of my aversion is not to be estimated. To have you confined as nurse in his apartment! My dear Alicia, of what a mistake were you guilty in marrying a man of his age! just old enough to be formal, ungovernable, and to have the gout; too old to be agreeable, too

young to die. I arrived last night about five, had scarcely swallowed my dinner when Mainwaring made his appearance. I will not dissemble what real pleasure his sight afforded me, nor how strongly I felt the contrast between his person and manners and those of Reginald, to the infinite disadvantage of the latter. For an hour or two I was even staggered in my resolution of marrying him, and though this was too idle and nonsensical an idea to remain long on my mind, I do not feel very eager for the conclusion of my marriage, nor look forward with much impatience to the time when Reginald, according to our agreement, is to be in town. I shall probably put off his arrival under some pretence or other. He must not come till Mainwaring is gone. I am still doubtful at times as to marrying; if the old man would die I might not hesitate, but a state of dependence on the caprice of Sir Reginald will not suit the freedom of my spirit; and if I resolve to wait for that event, I shall have excuse enough at present in having been scarcely ten months a widow. I have not given Mainwaring any hint of my intention, or allowed him to consider my acquaintance with Reginald as more than the commonest flirtation, and he is tolerably appeased. Adieu, till we meet; I am enchanted with my lodgings.

Yours ever,

S. Vernon

XXX.

Lady Susan Vernon to Mr. De Courcy.

Upper Seymour Street.

I have received your letter, and though I do not attempt to conceal that I am gratified by your impatience for the hour of meeting, I yet feel myself under the necessity of delaying that hour beyond the time originally fixed. Do not think me unkind for such an exercise of my power, nor accuse me of instability without first hearing my reasons. In the course of my journey from Churchhill I had ample leisure for reflection on the present state of our affairs, and every review has served to convince me that they require a delicacy and cautiousness of conduct to which we have hitherto been too little attentive. We have been hurried on by our feelings to a degree of precipitation which ill accords with the claims of our friends or the opinion of the world. We have been unguarded in forming this hasty engagement, but we must not complete the imprudence by ratifying it while there is so much reason to fear the connection would be opposed by those friends on whom you depend. It is not for us to blame any expectations on your father's side of your marrying to advantage; where possessions are so extensive as those of your family, the wish of increasing them, if not strictly reasonable, is too common to excite surprise or resentment. He has a right to require a woman of fortune in his daughter-in-law, and I am sometimes quarrelling with myself for suffering you to form a connection

so imprudent; but the influence of reason is often acknowledged too late by those who feel like me. I have now been but a few months a widow, and, however little indebted to my husband's memory for any happiness derived from him during a union of some years, I cannot forget that the indelicacy of so early a second marriage must subject me to the censure of the world, and incur, what would be still more insupportable, the displeasure of Mr. Vernon. I might perhaps harden myself in time against the injustice of general reproach, but the loss of his valued esteem I am, as you well know, ill-fitted to endure; and when to this may be added the consciousness of having injured you with your family, how am I to support myself? With feelings so poignant as mine, the conviction of having divided the son from his parents would make me, even with you, the most miserable of beings. It will surely, therefore, be advisable to delay our union — to delay it till appearances are more promising — till affairs have taken a more favorable turn. To assist us in such a resolution I feel that absence will be necessary. We must not meet. Cruel as this sentence may appear, the necessity of pronouncing it, which can alone reconcile it to myself, will be evident to you when you have considered our situation in the light in which I have found myself imperiously obliged to place it. You may be — you must be — well assured that nothing but the strongest conviction of duty could induce me to wound my own feelings by urging a lengthened separation, and of insensibility to yours you will hardly suspect me. Again, there-

fore, I say that we ought not, we must not, yet meet. By a removal for some months from each other we shall tranquillize the sisterly fears of Mrs. Vernon, who, accustomed herself to the enjoyment of riches, considers fortune as necessary everywhere, and whose sensibilities are not of a nature to comprehend ours. Let me hear from you soon — very soon. Tell me that you submit to my arguments, and do not reproach me for using such. I cannot bear reproaches: my spirits are not so high as to need being repressed. I must endeavor to seek amusement, and fortunately many of my friends are in town; amongst them the Mainwarings; you know how sincerely I regard both husband and wife.

I am, very faithfully yours,

S. Vernon.

XXXI.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

Upper Seymour Street.

My dear Friend, — That tormenting creature, Reginald, is here. My letter, which was intended to keep him longer in the country, has hastened him to town. Much as I wish him away, however, I cannot help being pleased with such a proof of attachment. He is devoted to me, heart and soul. He will carry this note himself, which is to serve as an introduction to you, with whom he longs to be acquainted. Allow him to spend the evening with you, that I may be in no danger of his returning here. I have told him that I am not quite well, and must be alone; and should he call again

there might be confusion, for it is impossible to be sure of servants. Keep him, therefore, I entreat you, in Edward Street. You will not find him a heavy companion, and I allow you to flirt with him as much as you like. At the same time do not forget my real interest; say all that you can to convince him that I shall be quite wretched if he remains here; you know my reasons, — propriety, and so forth. I would urge them more myself, but that I am impatient to be rid of him, as Mainwaring comes within half an hour. Adieu!

S. Vernon.

XXXII.

Mrs. Johnson to Lady Susan.

Edward Street.

My dear Creature, — I am in agonies, and know not what to do. Mr. De Courcy arrived just when he should not. Mrs. Mainwaring had that instant entered the house, and forced herself into her guardian's presence, though I did not know a syllable of it till afterwards, for I was out when both she and Reginald came, or I should have sent him away at all events; but she was shut up with Mr. Johnson, while he waited in the drawing-room for me. She arrived yesterday in pursuit of her husband, but perhaps you know this already from himself. She came to this house to entreat my husband's interference, and before I could be aware of it, everything that you could wish to be concealed was known to him, and unluckily she had wormed out of Mainwaring's servant that he had

visited you every day since your being in town, and had just watched him to your door herself! What could I do? Facts are such horrid things! All is by this time known to De Courcy, who is now alone with Mr. Johnson. Do not accuse me; indeed, it was impossible to prevent it. Mr. Johnson has for some time suspected De Courcy of intending to marry you, and would speak with him alone as soon as he knew him to be in the house. That detestable Mrs. Mainwaring, who, for your comfort, has fretted herself thinner and uglier than ever, is still here, and they have been all closeted together. What can be done? At any rate, I hope he will plague his wife more than ever. With anxious wishes,

Yours faithfully, ALICIA.

XXXIII.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

UPPER SEYMOUR STREET.

THIS *éclaircissement* is rather provoking. How unlucky that you should have been from home! I thought myself sure of you at seven! I am undismayed, however. Do not torment yourself with fears on my account; depend on it, I can make my story good with Reginald. Mainwaring is just gone; he brought me the news of his wife's arrival. Silly woman, what does she expect by such manœuvres? Yet I wish she had stayed quietly at Langford. Reginald will be a little enraged at first, but by to-morrow's dinner everything will be well again.

Adieu! S. V.

XXXIV.

Mr. De Courcy to Lady Susan.

——Hotel.

I write only to bid you farewell, the spell is removed; I see you as you are. Since we parted yesterday, I have received from indisputable authority such a history of you as must bring the most mortifying conviction of the imposition I have been under, and the absolute necessity of an immediate and eternal separation from you. You cannot doubt to what I allude. Langford! Langford! that word will be sufficient. I received my information in Mr. Johnson's house, from Mrs. Mainwaring herself. You know how I have loved you; you can intimately judge of my present feelings, but I am not so weak as to find indulgence in describing them to a woman who will glory in having excited their anguish, but whose affection they have never been able to gain.

R. de Courcy.

XXXV.

Lady Susan to Mr. De Courcy.

Upper Seymour Street.

I will not attempt to describe my astonishment in reading the note this moment received from you. I am bewildered in my endeavors to form some rational conjecture of what Mrs. Mainwaring can have told you to occasion so extraordinary a change in your sentiments. Have I not explained every-

thing to you with respect to myself which could bear a doubtful meaning, and which the ill-nature of the world had interpreted to my discredit? What can you now have heard to stagger your esteem for me? Have I ever had a concealment from you? Reginald, you agitate me beyond expression. I cannot suppose that the old story of Mrs. Mainwaring's jealousy can be revived again, or at least be listened to again. Come to me immediately, and explain what is at present absolutely incomprehensible. Believe me the single word of Langford is not of such potent intelligence as to supersede the necessity of more. If we are to part, it will at least be handsome to take your personal leave — but I have little heart to jest; in truth, I am serious enough; for to be sunk, though but for an hour, in your esteem is a humiliation to which I know not how to submit. I shall count every minute till your arrival.

S. V.

XXXVI.

Mr. De Courcy to Lady Susan.

—— Hotel.

Why would you write to me? Why do you require particulars? But since it must be so, I am obliged to declare that all the accounts of your misconduct during the life and since the death of Mr. Vernon, which had reached me, in common with the world in general, and gained my entire belief before I saw you, but which you, by the exertion of your perverted abilities, had made me resolved to disallow, have been unanswerably proved to me;

nay more, I am assured that a connection of which I had never before entertained a thought, has for some time existed, and still continues to exist, between you and the man whose family you robbed of its peace in return for the hospitality with which you were received into it; that you have corresponded with him ever since your leaving Langford; not with his wife, but with him, and that he now visits you every day. Can you, dare you deny it? and all this at the time when I was an encouraged, an accepted lover! From what have I not escaped! I have only to be grateful. Far from me be all complaint, every sigh of regret. My own folly had endangered me, my preservation I owe to the kindness, the integrity of another; but the unfortunate Mrs. Mainwaring, whose agonies while she related the past seemed to threaten her reason, — how is she to be consoled! After such a discovery as this, you will scarcely affect further wonder at my meaning in bidding you adieu. My understanding is at length restored, and teaches no less to abhor the artifices which had subdued me than to despise myself for the weakness on which their strength was founded.

R. DE COURCY.

XXXVII.

Lady Susan to Mr. De Courcy.

UPPER SEYMOUR STREET.

I AM satisfied, and will trouble you no more when these few lines are dismissed. The engagement which you were eager to form a fortnight ago

is no longer compatible with your views, and I rejoice to find that the prudent advice of your parents has not been given in vain. Your restoration to peace will, I doubt not, speedily follow this act of filial obedience, and I flatter myself with the hope of surviving my share in this disappointment.

S. V.

XXXVIII.

Mrs. Johnson to Lady Susan Vernon.

Edward Street.

I am grieved, though I cannot be astonished, at your rupture with Mr. De Courcy; he has just informed Mr. Johnson of it by letter. He leaves London, he says, to-day. Be assured that I partake in all your feelings, and do not be angry if I say that our intercourse, even by letter, must soon be given up. It makes me miserable; but Mr. Johnson vows that if I persist in the connection, he will settle in the country for the rest of his life, and you know it is impossible to submit to such an extremity while any other alternative remains. You have heard of course that the Mainwarings are to part, and I am afraid Mrs. M. will come home to us again; but she is still so fond of her husband, and frets so much about him, that perhaps she may not live long. Miss Mainwaring is just come to town to be with her aunt, and they say that she declares she will have Sir James Martin before she leaves London again. If I were you, I would certainly get him myself. I had almost forgot to give you my opinion of Mr. De

Courcy: I am really delighted with him; he is full as handsome, I think, as Mainwaring, and with such an open, good-humored countenance that one cannot help loving him at first sight. Mr. Johnson and he are the greatest friends in the world. Adieu, my dearest Susan, I wish matters did not go so perversely. That unlucky visit to Langford! but I dare say you did all for the best, and there is no defying destiny.

Your sincerely attached, ALICIA.

XXXIX.

Lady Susan to Mrs. Johnson.

UPPER SEYMOUR STREET.

MY DEAR ALICIA, — I yield to the necessity which parts us. Under circumstances you could not act otherwise. Our friendship cannot be impaired by it, and in happier times, when your situation is as independent as mine, it will unite us again in the same intimacy as ever. For this I shall impatiently wait, and meanwhile can safely assure you that I never was more at ease, or better satisfied with myself and everything about me than at the present hour. Your husband I abhor, Reginald I despise, and I am secure of never seeing either again. Have I not reason to rejoice? Mainwaring is more devoted to me than ever; and were we at liberty, I doubt if I could resist even matrimony offered by him. This event, if his wife live with you, it may be in your power to hasten. The violence of her feelings, which must

wear her out, may be easily kept in irritation. I rely on your friendship for this. I am now satisfied that I never could have brought myself to marry Reginald, and am equally determined that Frederica never shall. To-morrow I shall fetch her from Churchhill, and let Maria Mainwaring tremble for the consequence. Frederica shall be Sir James's wife before she quits my house, and she may whimper, and the Vernons may storm, I regard them not. I am tired of submitting my will to the caprices of others; of resigning my own judgment in deference to those to whom I owe no duty, and for whom I feel no respect; I have given up too much, have been too easily worked on, but Frederica shall now feel the difference. Adieu, dearest of friends; may the next gouty attack be more favorable! and may you always regard me as unalterably yours,

S. Vernon.

XL.

Lady De Courcy to Mrs. Vernon.

My dear Catherine, — I have charming news for you, and if I had not sent off my letter this morning you might have been spared the vexation of knowing of Reginald's being gone to London, for he is returned. Reginald is returned, not to ask our consent to his marrying Lady Susan, but to tell us they are parted forever. He has been only an hour in the house, and I have not been able to learn particulars, for he is so very low that I have not the heart to ask questions, but I hope

we shall soon know all. This is the most joyful hour he has ever given us since the day of his birth. Nothing is wanting but to have you here, and it is our particular wish and entreaty that you would come to us as soon as you can. You have owed us a visit many long weeks; I hope nothing will make it inconvenient to Mr. Vernon; and pray bring all my grandchildren; and your dear niece is included, of course; I long to see her. It has been a sad, heavy winter hitherto, without Reginald, and seeing nobody from Churchhill. I never found the season so dreary before; but this happy meeting will make us young again. Frederica runs much in my thoughts, and when Reginald has recovered his usual good spirits (as I trust he soon will), we will try to rob him of his heart once more, and I am full of hopes of seeing their hands joined at no great distance.

Your affectionate mother,

C. DE COURCY.

XLI.

Mrs. Vernon to Lady De Courcy.

CHURCHHILL.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — Your letter has surprised me beyond measure! Can it be true that they are really separated — and forever? I should be overjoyed if I dared depend on it, but after all that I have seen how can one be secure? And Reginald really with you! My surprise is the greater because on Wednesday, the very day of his coming to Parklands, we had a most unexpected and un

welcome visit from Lady Susan, looking all cheerfulness and good-humor, and seeming more as if she were to marry him when she got to London than as if parted from him forever. She stayed nearly two hours, was as affectionate and agreeable as ever, and not a syllable, not a hint was dropped, of any disagreement or coolness between them. I asked her whether she had seen my brother since his arrival in town; not, as you may suppose, with any doubt of the fact, but merely to see how she looked. She immediately answered, without any embarrassment, that he had been kind enough to call on her on Monday; but she believed he had already returned home, which I was very far from crediting. Your kind invitation is accepted by us with pleasure, and on Thursday next we and our little ones will be with you. Pray heaven, Reginald may not be in town again by that time! I wish we could bring dear Frederica too, but I am sorry to say that her mother's errand hither was to fetch her away; and, miserable as it made the poor girl, it was impossible to detain her. I was thoroughly unwilling to let her go, and so was her uncle; and all that could be urged we did urge; but Lady Susan declared that as she was now about to fix herself in London for several months, she could not be easy if her daughter were not with her for masters, etc. Her manner, to be sure, was very kind and proper, and Mr. Vernon believes that Frederica will now be treated with affection. I wish I could think so too. The poor girl's heart was almost broke at taking leave of us. I charged her to write to me very often, and to re-

member that if she were in any distress we should be always her friends. I took care to see her alone, that I might say all this, and I hope made her a little more comfortable; but I shall not be easy till I can go to town and judge of her situation myself. I wish there were a better prospect than now appears of the match which the conclusion of your letter declares your expectations of. At present it is not very likely.

Yours ever, etc.,

C. VERNON.

CONCLUSION.

THIS correspondence, by a meeting between some of the parties, and a separation between the others, could not, to the great detriment of the Post-Office revenue, be continued any longer. Very little assistance to the State could be derived from the epistolary intercourse of Mrs. Vernon and her niece; for the former soon perceived, by the style of Frederica's letters, that they were written under her mother's inspection! and therefore, deferring all particular inquiry till she could make it personally in London, ceased writing minutely or often. Having learnt enough in the mean while, from her open-hearted brother, of what had passed between him and Lady Susan to sink the latter lower than ever in her opinion, she was proportionably more anxious to get Frederica removed from such a mother, and placed under her own care; and, though with little hope of success, was re-

solved to leave nothing unattempted that might offer a chance of obtaining her sister-in-law's consent to it. Her anxiety on the subject made her press for an early visit to London; and Mr. Vernon, who, as it must already have appeared, lived only to do whatever he was desired, soon found some accommodating business to call him thither. With a heart full of the matter, Mrs. Vernon waited on Lady Susan shortly after her arrival in town, and was met with such an easy and cheerful affection, as made her almost turn from her with horror. No remembrance of Reginald, no consciousness of guilt, gave one look of embarrassment; she was in excellent spirits, and seemed eager to show at once by every possible attention to her brother and sister her sense of their kindness, and her pleasure in their society. Frederica was no more altered than Lady Susan; the same restrained manners, the same timid look in the presence of her mother as heretofore, assured her aunt of her situation being uncomfortable, and confirmed her in the plan of altering it. No unkindness, however, on the part of Lady Susan appeared. Persecution on the subject of Sir James was entirely at an end; his name merely mentioned to say that he was not in London; and indeed, in all her conversation she was solicitous only for the welfare and improvement of her daughter, acknowledging, in terms of grateful delight, that Frederica was now growing every day more and more what a parent could desire. Mrs. Vernon, surprised and incredulous, knew not what to suspect, and, without any change in her own views, only feared

greater difficulty in accomplishing them. The first hope of anything better was derived from Lady Susan's asking her whether she thought Frederica looked quite as well as she had done at Churchhill, as she must confess herself to have sometimes an anxious doubt of London's perfectly agreeing with her. Mrs. Vernon, encouraging the doubt, directly proposed her niece's returning with them into the country. Lady Susan was unable to express her sense of such kindness, yet knew not, from a variety of reasons, how to part with her daughter; and as, though her own plans were not yet wholly fixed, she trusted it would erelong be in her power to take Frederica into the country herself, concluded by declining entirely to profit by such unexampled attention. Mrs. Vernon persevered, however, in the offer of it; and though Lady Susan continued to resist, her resistance in the course of a few days seemed somewhat less formidable. The lucky alarm of an influenza decided what might not have been decided quite so soon. Lady Susan's maternal fears were then too much awakened for her to think of anything but Frederica's removal from the risk of infection; above all disorders in the world she most dreaded the influenza for her daughter's constitution!

Frederica returned to Churchhill with her uncle and aunt; and three weeks afterwards, Lady Susan announced her being married to Sir James Martin. Mrs. Vernon was then convinced of what she had only suspected before, that she might have spared herself all the trouble of urging a removal which Lady Susan had doubtless resolved on from the

first. Frederica's visit was nominally for six weeks; but her mother, though inviting her to return in one or two affectionate letters, was very ready to oblige the whole party by consenting to a prolongation of her stay, and in the course of two months ceased to write of her absence, and in the course of two more to write to her at all. Frederica was therefore fixed in the family of her uncle and aunt till such time as Reginald de Courcy could be talked, flattered, and finessed into an affection for her which, allowing leisure for the conquest of his attachment to her mother, for his abjuring all future attachments, and detesting the sex, might be reasonably looked for in the course of a twelvemonth. Three months might have done it in general, but Reginald's feelings were no less lasting than lively. Whether Lady Susan was or was not happy in her second choice, I do not see how it can ever be ascertained; for who would take her assurance of it on either side of the question? The world must judge from probabilities; she had nothing against her but her husband and her conscience. Sir James may seem to have drawn a harder lot than mere folly merited; I leave him, therefore, to all the pity that anybody can give him. For myself, I confess that *I* can pity only Miss Mainwaring, who, coming to town, and putting herself to an expense in clothes which impoverished her for two years, on purpose to secure him, was defrauded of her due by a woman ten years older than herself.

THE WATSONS.

PREFACE.

THIS WORK was left by its author a fragment without a name, in so elementary a state as not even to be divided into chapters; and some obscurities and inaccuracies of expression may be observed in it which the author would probably have corrected. The original manuscript is the property of my sister, Miss Austen, by whose permission it is now published. I have called it "The Watsons," for the sake of having a title by which to designate it. Two questions may be asked concerning it, — When was it written? and, Why was it never finished? I was unable to answer the first question, so long as I had only the internal evidence of the style to guide me. I felt satisfied, indeed, that it did not belong to that early class of her writings which are mentioned at page 218 of the Memoir, but rather bore marks of her more mature style, though it had never been subjected to the filing and polishing process by which she was accustomed to impart a high finish to her published works. At last, on a close inspection of the original manuscript, the water-marks of

1803 and 1804 were found in the paper on which it was written. It is therefore probable that it was composed at Bath, before she ceased to reside there in 1805. This would place the date a few years later than the composition, but earlier than the publication, of "Sense and Sensibility" and "Pride and Prejudice."

To the second question, Why was it never finished? I can give no satisfactory answer. I think it will be generally admitted that there is much in it which promised well: that some of the characters are drawn with her wonted vigor, and some with a delicate discrimination peculiarly her own; and that it is rich in her especial power of telling the story, and bringing out the characters by conversation rather than by description. It could not have been broken up for the purpose of using the materials in another fabric; for, with the exception of Mrs. Robert Watson, in whom a resemblance to the future Mrs. Elton is very discernible, it would not be easy to trace much resemblance between this and any of her subsequent works. She must have felt some regret at leaving Tom Musgrave's character incomplete; yet he never appears elsewhere. My own idea is, but it is only a guess, that the author became aware of the evil of having placed her heroine too low, in such a position of poverty and obscurity as, though not necessarily connected with vulgarity, has a

sad tendency to degenerate into it; and therefore, like a singer who has begun on too low a note, she discontinued the strain. It was an error of which she was likely to become more sensible, as she grew older, and saw more of society; certainly she never repeated it by placing the heroine of any subsequent work under circumstances likely to be unfavorable to the refinement of a lady.

THE WATSONS.

THE first winter assembly in the town of D. in Surrey was to be held on Tuesday, October 13th, and it was generally expected to be a very good one. A long list of county families was confidently run over as sure of attending, and sanguine hopes were entertained that the Osbornes themselves would be there. The Edwards' invitation to the Watsons followed, of course. The Edwards were people of fortune, who lived in the town and kept their coach. The Watsons inhabited a village about three miles distant, were poor, and had no close carriage; and ever since there had been balls in the place, the former were accustomed to invite the latter to dress, dine, and sleep at their house on every monthly return throughout the winter. On the present occasion, as only two of Mr. Watson's children were at home, and one was always necessary as companion to himself, for he was sickly and had lost his wife, one only could profit by the kindness of their friends. Miss Emma Watson,

who was very recently returned to her family from the care of an aunt who had brought her up, was to make her first public appearance in the neighborhood, and her eldest sister, whose delight in a ball was not lessened by a ten years' enjoyment, had some merit in cheerfully undertaking to drive her and all her finery in the old chair to D. on the important morning.

As they splashed along the dirty lane, Miss Watson thus instructed and cautioned her inexperienced sister: —

"I dare say it will be a very good ball, and among so many officers you will hardly want partners. You will find Mrs. Edwards' maid very willing to help you, and I would advise you to ask Mary Edwards' opinion if you are at all at a loss, for she has a very good taste. If Mr. Edwards does not lose his money at cards, you will stay as late as you can wish for; if he does, he will hurry you home perhaps — but you are sure of some comfortable soup. I hope you will be in good looks. I should not be surprised if you were to be thought one of the prettiest girls in the room; there is a great deal in novelty. Perhaps Tom Musgrave may take notice of you; but I would advise you by all means not to give him any encouragement. He generally pays attention to every new girl; but he is a great flirt, and never means anything serious."

"I think I have heard you speak of him before," said Emma; "who is he?"

"A young man of very good fortune, quite independent, and remarkably agreeable, — a univer-

sal favorite wherever he goes. Most of the girls hereabout are in love with him, or have been. I believe I am the only one among them that have escaped with a whole heart; and yet I was the first he paid attention to when he came into this country six years ago; and very great attention did he pay me. Some people say that he has never seemed to like any girl so well since, though he is always behaving in a particular way to one or another."

"And how came your heart to be the only cold one?" said Emma, smiling.

"There was a reason for that," replied Miss Watson, changing color, — "I have not been very well used among them, Emma. I hope you will have better luck."

"Dear sister, I beg your pardon if I have unthinkingly given you pain."

"When first we knew Tom Musgrave," continued Miss Watson, without seeming to hear her, "I was very much attached to a young man of the name of Purvis, a particular friend of Robert's, who used to be with us a great deal. Everybody thought it would have been a match."

A sigh accompanied these words, which Emma respected in silence; but her sister after a short pause went on.

"You will naturally ask why it did not take place, and why he is married to another woman, while I am still single. But you must ask him, not me, — you must ask Penelope. Yes, Emma, Penelope was at the bottom of it all. She thinks everything fair for a husband. I trusted her; she

set him against me, with a view of gaining him herself, and it ended in his discontinuing his visits, and soon after marrying somebody else. Penelope makes light of her conduct, but I think such treachery very bad. It has been the ruin of my happiness I shall never love any man as I loved Purvis. I do not think Tom Musgrave should be named with him in the same day."

"You quite shock me by what you say of Penelope," said Emma. "Could a sister do such a thing? Rivalry, treachery between sisters! I shall be afraid of being acquainted with her. But I hope it was not so; appearances were against her."

"You do not know Penelope. There is nothing she would not do to get married. She would as good as tell you so herself. Do not trust her with any secrets of your own, take warning by me, do not trust her; she has her good qualities, but she has no faith, no honor, no scruples, if she can promote her own advantage. I wish with all my heart she was well married. I declare I had rather have her well married than myself."

"Than yourself! yes, I can suppose so. A heart wounded like yours can have little inclination for matrimony."

"Not much indeed — but you know we must marry. I could do very well single for my own part; a little company, and a pleasant ball now and then, would be enough for me, if one could be young forever; but my father cannot provide for us, and it is very bad to grow old and be poor and laughed at. I have lost Purvis, it is true; but very few people marry their first loves. I should

not refuse a man because he was not Purvis. Not that I can ever quite forgive Penelope."

Emma shook her head in acquiescence

"Penelope, however, has had her troubles," continued Miss Watson. "She was sadly disappointed in Tom Musgrave, who afterwards transferred his attentions from me to her, and whom she was very fond of; but he never means anything serious, and when he had trifled with her long enough, he began to slight her for Margaret, and poor Penelope was very wretched. And since then she has been trying to make some match at Chichester, — she won't tell us with whom; but I believe it is a rich old Dr. Harding, uncle to the friend she goes to see; and she has taken a vast deal of trouble about him, and given up a great deal of time to no purpose as yet. When she went away the other day, she said it should be the last time. I suppose you did not know what her particular business was at Chichester, nor guess at the object which could take her away from Stanton just as you were coming home after so many years' absence."

"No indeed, I had not the smallest suspicion of it. I considered her engagement to Mrs. Shaw just at that time as very unfortunate for me. I had hoped to find all my sisters at home, to be able to make an immediate friend of each."

"I suspect the Doctor to have had an attack of the asthma, and that she was hurried away on that account. The Shaws are quite on her side, — at least, I believe so; but she tells me nothing. She professes to keep her own counsel; she says, and

truly enough, that 'Too many cooks spoil the broth.'"

"I am sorry for her anxieties," said Emma; "but I do not like her plans or her opinions. I shall be afraid of her. She must have too masculine and bold a temper. To be so bent on marriage, to pursue a man merely for the sake of situation, is a sort of thing that shocks me; I cannot understand it. Poverty is a great evil; but to a woman of education and feeling it ought not, it cannot be the greatest. I would rather be teacher at a school (and I can think of nothing worse) than marry a man I did not like."

"I would rather do anything than be teacher at a school," said her sister. "I have been at school, Emma, and know what a life they lead; you never have. I should not like marrying a disagreeable man any more than yourself; but I do not think there are many very disagreeable men; I think I could like any good-humored man with a comfortable income. I suppose my aunt brought you up to be rather refined."

"Indeed I do not know. My conduct must tell you how I have been brought up. I am no judge of it myself. I cannot compare my aunt's method with any other person's, because I know no other."

"But I can see in a great many things that you are very refined. I have observed it ever since you came home, and I am afraid it will not be for your happiness. Penelope will laugh at you very much."

"That will not be for my happiness, I am sure. If my opinions are wrong, I must correct them; if

they are above my situation, I must endeavor to conceal them; but I doubt whether ridicule — Has Penelope much wit?"

"Yes; she has great spirits, and never cares what she says."

"Margaret is more gentle, I imagine?"

"Yes; especially in company. She is all gentleness and mildness when anybody is by; but she is a little fretful and perverse among ourselves. Poor creature! She is possessed with the notion of Tom Musgrave's being more seriously in love with her than he ever was with anybody else, and is always expecting him to come to the point. This is the second time within this twelvemonth that she has gone to spend a month with Robert and Jane on purpose to egg him on by her absence; but I am sure she is mistaken, and that he will no more follow her to Croydon now than he did last March. He will never marry unless he can marry somebody very great, — Miss Osborne, perhaps, or somebody in that style."

"Your account of this Tom Musgrave, Elizabeth, gives me very little inclination for his acquaintance."

"You are afraid of him; I do not wonder at you."

"No, indeed; I dislike and despise him."

"Dislike and despise Tom Musgrave! No, that you never can. I defy you not to be delighted with him if he takes notice of you. I hope he will dance with you; and I dare say he will, unless the Osbornes come with a large party, and then he will not speak to anybody else."

"He seems to have most engaging manners!" said Emma. "Well, we shall see how irresistible Mr. Tom Musgrave and I find each other. I suppose I shall know him as soon as I enter the ball-room; he must carry some of his charms in his face."

"You will not find him in the ball-room, I can tell you; you will go early, that Mrs. Edwards may get a good place by the fire, and he never comes till late; if the Osbornes are coming, he will wait in the passage and come in with them. I should like to look in upon you, Emma. If it was but a good day with my father, I would wrap myself up, and James should drive me over as soon as I had made tea for him; and I should be with you by the time the dancing began."

"What! Would you come late at night in this chair?"

"To be sure I would. There, I said you were very refined, and that 's an instance of it."

Emma for a moment made no answer. At last she said, —

"I wish, Elizabeth, you had not made a point of my going to this ball; I wish you were going instead of me. Your pleasure would be greater than mine. I am a stranger here, and know nobody but the Edwards; my enjoyment, therefore, must be very doubtful. Yours, among all your acquaintance, would be certain. It is not too late to change. Very little apology could be requisite to the Edwards, who must be more glad of your company than of mine, and I should most readily return to my father; and should not be at all afraid to drive this quiet old creature home. Your

clothes I would undertake to find means of sending to you."

"My dearest Emma," cried Elizabeth, warmly, "do you think I would do such a thing? Not for the universe! But I shall never forget your good-nature in proposing it. You must have a sweet temper indeed! I never met with anything like it! And would you really give up the ball that I might be able to go to it? Believe me, Emma, I am not so selfish as that comes to. No; though I am nine years older than you are, I would not be the means of keeping you from being seen. You are very pretty, and it would be very hard that you should not have as fair a chance as we have all had to make your fortune. No, Emma, whoever stays at home this winter, it sha'n't be you. I am sure I should never have forgiven the person who kept me from a ball at nineteen."

Emma expressed her gratitude, and for a few minutes they jogged on in silence. Elizabeth first spoke: —

"You will take notice who Mary Edwards dances with?"

"I will remember her partners, if I can; but you know they will be all strangers to me."

"Only observe whether she dances with Captain Hunter more than once, — I have my fears in that quarter. Not that her father or mother like officers; but if she does, you know, it is all over with poor Sam. And I have promised to write him word who she dances with."

"Is Sam attached to Miss Edwards?"

"Did not you know that?"

"How should I know it? How should I know in Shropshire what is passing of that nature in Surrey? It is not likely that circumstances of such delicacy should have made any part of the scanty communication which passed between you and me for the last fourteen years."

"I wonder I never mentioned it when I wrote. Since you have been at home, I have been so busy with my poor father and our great wash that I have had no leisure to tell you anything; but, indeed, I concluded you knew it all. He has been very much in love with her these two years, and it is a great disappointment to him that he cannot always get away to our balls; but Mr. Curtis won't often spare him, and just now it is a sickly time at Guildford."

"Do you suppose Miss Edwards inclined to like him?"

"I am afraid not: you know she is an only child, and will have at least ten thousand pounds.

"But still she may like our brother."

"Oh, no! The Edwards look much higher. Her father and mother would never consent to it. Sam is only a surgeon, you know. Sometimes I think she does like him. But Mary Edwards is rather prim and reserved; I do not always know what she would be at."

"Unless Sam feels on sure grounds with the lady herself, it seems a pity to me that he should be encouraged to think of her at all."

"A young man must think of somebody," said Elizabeth, "and why should not he be as lucky as Robert, who has got a good wife and six thousand pounds?"

"We must not all expect to be individually lucky," replied Emma. "The luck of one member of a family is luck to all."

"Mine is all to come, I am sure," said Elizabeth, giving another sigh to the remembrance of Purvis. "I have been unlucky enough; and I cannot say much for you, as my aunt married again so foolishly. Well, you will have a good ball, I daresay. The next turning will bring us to the turnpike: you may see the church-tower over the hedge, and the White Hart is close by it. I shall long to know what you think of Tom Musgrave."

Such were the last audible sounds of Miss Watson's voice, before they passed through the turnpike-gate, and entered on the pitching of the town, the jumbling and noise of which made further conversation most thoroughly undesirable. The old mare trotted heavily on, wanting no direction of the reins to take the right turning, and making only one blunder, in proposing to stop at the milliner's before she drew up towards Mr. Edwards' door. Mr. Edwards lived in the best house in the street, and the best in the place, if Mr. Tomlinson, the banker, might be indulged in calling his newly erected house at the end of the town, with a shrubbery and sweep, in the country.

Mr. Edwards' house was higher than most of its neighbors, with four windows on each side the door; the windows guarded by posts and chains, and the door approached by a flight of stone steps.

"Here we are," said Elizabeth, as the carriage ceased moving, "safely arrived, and by the market

clock we have been only five-and-thirty minutes coming; which I think is doing pretty well, though it would be nothing for Penelope. Is not it a nice town? The Edwards have a noble house, you see, and they live quite in style. The door will be opened by a man in livery, with a powdered head, I can tell you."

Emma had seen the Edwards only one morning at Stanton; they were therefore all but strangers to her; and though her spirits were by no means insensible to the expected joys of the evening, she felt a little uncomfortable in the thought of all that was to precede them. Her conversation with Elizabeth, too, giving her some very unpleasant feelings with respect to her own family, had made her more open to disagreeable impressions from any other cause, and increased her sense of the awkwardness of rushing into intimacy on so slight an acquaintance.

There was nothing in the manner of Mrs. and Miss Edwards to give immediate change to these ideas. The mother, though a very friendly woman, had a reserved air, and a great deal of formal civility; and the daughter, a genteel-looking girl of twenty-two, with her hair in papers, seemed very naturally to have caught something of the style of her mother, who had brought her up. Emma was soon left to know what they could be, by Elizabeth's being obliged to hurry away; and some very languid remarks on the probable brilliancy of the ball were all that broke, at intervals, a silence of half an hour, before they were joined by the master of the house. Mr. Edwards had a much

easier and more communicative air than the ladies of the family; he was fresh from the street, and he came ready to tell whatever might interest. After a cordial reception of Emma, he turned to his daughter with, —

"Well, Mary, I bring you good news: the Osbornes will certainly be at the ball to-night. Horses for two carriages are ordered from the White Hart to be at Osborne Castle by nine."

"I am glad of it," observed Mrs. Edwards, "because their coming gives a credit to our assembly. The Osbornes being known to have been at the first ball, will dispose a great many people to attend the second. It is more than they deserve; for, in fact, they add nothing to the pleasure of the evening: they come so late and go so early; but great people have always their charm."

Mr. Edwards proceeded to relate many other little articles of news which his morning's lounge had supplied him with, and they chatted with greater briskness, till Mrs. Edwards' moment for dressing arrived, and the young ladies were carefully recommended to lose no time. Emma was shown to a very comfortable apartment, and as soon as Mrs. Edwards' civilities could leave her to herself, the happy occupation, the first bliss of a ball, began. The girls, dressing in some measure together, grew unavoidably better acquainted. Emma found in Miss Edwards the show of good sense, a modest unpretending mind, and a great wish of obliging; and when they returned to the parlor where Mrs. Edwards was sitting, respectably attired in one of the two satin gowns which went

through the winter, and a new cap from the milliner's, they entered it with much easier feelings and more natural smiles than they had taken away. Their dress was now to be examined: Mrs. Edwards acknowledged herself too old-fashioned to approve of every modern extravagance, however sanctioned; and though complacently viewing her daughter's good looks, would give but a qualified admiration; and Mr. Edwards, not less satisfied with Mary, paid some compliments of good-humored gallantry to Emma at her expense. The discussion led to more intimate remarks, and Miss Edwards gently asked Emma if she was not often reckoned very like her youngest brother. Emma thought she could perceive a faint blush accompany the question, and there seemed something still more suspicious in the manner in which Mr. Edwards took up the subject.

"You are paying Miss Emma no great compliment, I think, Mary," said he, hastily. "Mr. Sam Watson is a very good sort of young man, and I dare say a very clever surgeon; but his complexion has been rather too much exposed to all weathers to make a likeness to him very flattering."

Mary apologized, in some confusion, —

"She had not thought a strong likeness at all incompatible with very different degrees of beauty. There might be resemblance in countenance, and the complexion and even the features be very unlike."

"I know nothing of my brother's beauty," said Emma, "for I have not seen him since he

was seven years old; but my father reckons us alike."

"Mr. Watson!" cried Mr. Edwards; "well, you astonish me. There is not the least likeness in the world; your brother's eyes are gray, yours are brown; he has a long face and a wide mouth. My dear, do you perceive the least resemblance?"

"Not the least: Miss Emma Watson puts me very much in mind of her eldest sister, and sometimes I see a look of Miss Penelope, and once or twice there has been a glance of Mr. Robert, but I cannot perceive any likeness to Mr. Samuel."

"I see the likeness between her and Miss Watson," replied Mr. Edwards, "very strongly, but I am not sensible of the others. I do not much think she is like any of the family but Miss Watson; but I am very sure there is no resemblance between her and Sam."

This matter was settled, and they went to dinner.

"Your father, Miss Emma, is one of my oldest friends," said Mr. Edwards, as he helped her to wine, when they were drawn round the fire to enjoy their dessert. "We must drink to his better health. It is a great concern to me, I assure you, that he should be such an invalid. I know nobody who likes a game of cards, in a social way, better than he does, and very few people who play a fairer rubber. It is a thousand pities that he should be so deprived of the pleasure. For now we have a quiet little Whist Club, that meets three times a week at the White Hart; and if he could but have his health, how much he would enjoy it!"

"I dare say he would, sir; and I wish, with all my heart, he were equal to it."

"Your club would be better fitted for an invalid," said Mrs. Edwards, "if you did not keep it up so late." This was an old grievance.

"So late, my dear! What are you talking of?" cried the husband, with sturdy pleasantry. "We are always at home before midnight. They would laugh at Osborne Castle to hear you call that late; they are but just rising from dinner at midnight."

"That is nothing to the purpose," retorted the lady, calmly. "The Osbornes are to be no rule for us. You had better meet every night, and break up two hours sooner."

So far the subject was very often carried; but Mr. and Mrs. Edwards were so wise as never to pass that point; and Mr. Edwards now turned to something else. He had lived long enough in the idleness of a town to become a little of a gossip, and having some anxiety to know more of the circumstances of his young guest than had yet reached him, he began with, —

"I think, Miss Emma, I remember your aunt very well, about thirty years ago; I am pretty sure I danced with her in the old rooms at Bath the year before I married. She was a very fine woman then; but like other people, I suppose, she is grown somewhat older since that time. I hope she is likely to be happy in her second choice."

"I hope so; I believe so, sir," said Emma, in some agitation.

"Mr. Turner had not been dead a great while, I think?"

"About two years, sir."

"I forget what her name is now."

"O'Brien."

"Irish! ah, I remember; and she is gone to settle in Ireland. I do not wonder that you should not wish to go with her into that country, Miss Emma; but it must be a great deprivation to her, poor lady! after bringing you up like a child of her own."

"I was not so ungrateful, sir," said Emma, warmly, "as to wish to be anywhere but with her. It did not suit Captain O'Brien that I should be of the party."

"Captain!" repeated Mrs. Edwards. "The gentleman is in the army then?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Ay, there is nothing like your officers for captivating the ladies, young or old. There is no resisting a cockade, my dear."

"I hope there is," said Mrs. Edwards, gravely, with a quick glance at her daughter; and Emma had just recovered from her own perturbation in time to see a blush on Miss Edwards' cheek, and in remembering what Elizabeth had said of Captain Hunter, to wonder and waver between his influence and her brother's.

"Elderly ladies should be careful how they make a second choice," observed Mr. Edwards.

"Carefulness and discretion should not be confined to elderly ladies or to a second choice," added his wife. "They are quite as necessary to young ladies in their first."

"Rather more so, my dear," replied he; "because young ladies are likely to feel the effects of it longer. When an old lady plays the fool, it is not in the course of nature that she should suffer from it many years."

Emma drew her hand across her eyes; and Mrs. Edwards, in perceiving it, changed the subject to one of less anxiety to all.

With nothing to do but to expect the hour of setting off, the afternoon was long to the two young ladies; and though Miss Edwards was rather discomposed at the very early hour which her mother always fixed for going, that early hour itself was watched for with some eagerness. The entrance of the tea-things at seven o'clock was some relief; and luckily Mr. and Mrs. Edwards always drank a dish extraordinary and ate an additional muffin when they were going to sit up late, which lengthened the ceremony almost to the wished-for moment.

At a little before eight o'clock the Tomlinsons' carriage was heard to go by, which was the constant signal for Mrs. Edwards to order hers to the door; and in a very few minutes the party were transported from the quiet and warmth of a snug parlor to the bustle, noise, and draughts of air of a broad entrance passage of an inn. Mrs. Edwards, carefully guarding her own dress, while she attended with yet greater solicitude to the proper security of her young charges' shoulders and throats, led the way up the wide staircase, while no sound of a ball but the first scrape of one violin blessed the ears of her followers; and Miss

Edwards, on hazarding the anxious inquiry of whether there were many people come yet, was told by the waiter, as she knew she should, that Mr. Tomlinson's family were in the room.

In passing along a short gallery to the assembly-room, brilliant in lights before them, they were accosted by a young man in a morning-dress and boots, who was standing in the doorway of a bedchamber apparently on purpose to see them go by.

"Ah! Mrs. Edwards, how do you do? How do you do, Miss Edwards?" he cried, with an easy air. "You are determined to be in good time, I see, as usual. The candles are but this moment lit."

"I like to get a good seat by the fire, you know, Mr. Musgrave," replied Mrs. Edwards.

"I am this moment going to dress," said he. "I am waiting for my stupid fellow. We shall have a famous ball. The Osbornes are certainly coming; you may depend upon that, for I was with Lord Osborne this morning."

The party passed on. Mrs. Edwards' satin gown swept along the clean floor of the ballroom to the fireplace at the upper end, where one party only were formally seated, while three or four officers were lounging together, passing in and out from the adjoining card-room. A very stiff meeting between these near neighbors ensued; and as soon as they were all duly placed again, Emma, in a low whisper, which became the solemn scene, said to Miss Edwards,—

"The gentleman we passed in the passage was Mr. Musgrave, then; he is reckoned remarkably agreeable, I understand?"

Miss Edwards answered hesitatingly, "Yes; he is very much liked by many people; but we are not very intimate."

"He is rich, is not he?"

"He has about eight or nine hundred a year, I believe. He came into possession of it when he was very young, and my father and mother think it has given him rather an unsettled turn. He is no favorite with them."

The cold and empty appearance of the room, and the demure air of the small cluster of females at one end of it, began soon to give way. The inspiriting sound of other carriages was heard, and continual accessions of portly chaperons and strings of smartly dressed girls were received, with now and then a fresh gentleman straggler, who, if not enough in love to station himself near any fair creature, seemed glad to escape into the card-room.

Among the increasing number of military men, one now made his way to Miss Edwards with an air of empressement which decidedly said to her companion, "I am Captain Hunter;" and Emma, who could not but watch her at such a moment, saw her looking rather distressed, but by no means displeased, and heard an engagement formed for the two first dances, which made her think her brother Sam's a hopeless case.

Emma in the mean while was not unobserved or unadmired herself. A new face, and a very pretty one, could not be slighted. Her name was whispered from one party to another; and no sooner had the signal been given by the orchestra's striking up a favorite air, which seemed to call the young to

their duty and people the centre of the room, than she found herself engaged to dance with a brother officer, introduced by Captain Hunter.

Emma Watson was not more than of the middle height, well made and plump, with an air of healthy vigor. Her skin was very brown, but clear, smooth, and glowing, which, with a lively eye, a sweet smile, and an open countenance, gave beauty to attract, and expression to make that beauty improve on acquaintance. Having no reason to be dissatisfied with her partner, the evening began very pleasantly to her, and her feelings perfectly coincided with the reiterated observation of others, that it was an excellent ball. The two first dances were not quite over when the returning sound of carriages after a long interruption called general notice. "The Osbornes are coming! The Osbornes are coming!" was repeated round the room. After some minutes of extraordinary bustle without and watchful curiosity within, the important party, preceded by the attentive master of the inn to open a door which was never shut, made their appearance. They consisted of Lady Osborne; her son, Lord Osborne; her daughter, Miss Osborne; Miss Carr, her daughter's friend; Mr. Howard, formerly tutor to Lord Osborne, now clergyman of the parish in which the castle stood; Mrs. Blake, a widow sister, who lived with him; her son, a fine boy of ten years old; and Mr. Tom Musgrave, who probably, imprisoned within his own room, had been listening in bitter impatience to the sound of the music for the last half-hour. In their progress up the room they paused almost

immediately behind Emma to receive the compliments of some acquaintance; and she heard Lady Osborne observe that they had made a point of coming early for the gratification of Mrs. Blake's little boy, who was uncommonly fond of dancing. Emma looked at them all as they passed, but chiefly and with most interest on Tom Musgrave, who was certainly a genteel, good-looking young man. Of the females Lady Osborne had by much the finest person; though nearly fifty, she was very handsome, and had all the dignity of rank.

Lord Osborne was a very fine young man; but there was an air of coldness, of carelessness, even of awkwardness about him, which seemed to speak him out of his element in a ball-room. He came, in fact, only because it was judged expedient for him to please the borough; he was not fond of women's company, and he never danced. Mr. Howard was an agreeable-looking man, a little more than thirty.

At the conclusion of the two dances Emma found herself, she knew not how, seated amongst the Osbornes' set; and she was immediately struck with the fine countenance and animated gestures of the little boy, as he was standing before his mother, considering when they should begin.

"You will not be surprised at Charles's impatience," said Mrs. Blake, a lively, pleasant-looking little woman of five or six and thirty, to a lady who was standing near her, "when you know what a partner he is to have. Miss Osborne has been so very kind as to promise to dance the two first dances with him."

"Oh, yes! we have been engaged this week," cried the boy, "and we are to dance down every couple."

On the other side of Emma, Miss Osborne, Miss Carr, and a party of young men were standing engaged in very lively consultation; and soon afterwards she saw the smartest officer of the set walking off to the orchestra to order the dance, while Miss Osborne, passing before her to her little expecting partner, hastily said: "Charles, I beg your pardon for not keeping my engagement, but I am going to dance these two dances with Colonel Beresford. I know you will excuse me, and I will certainly dance with you after tea;" and without staying for an answer, she turned again to Miss Carr, and in another minute was led by Colonel Beresford to begin the set. If the poor little boy's face had in its happiness been interesting to Emma, it was infinitely more so under this sudden reverse; he stood the picture of disappointment, with crimsoned cheeks, quivering lips, and eyes bent on the floor. His mother, stifling her own mortification, tried to soothe his with the prospect of Miss Osborne's second promise; but though he contrived to utter, with an effort of boyish bravery, "Oh, I do not mind it!" it was very evident, by the unceasing agitation of his features, that he minded it as much as ever.

Emma did not think or reflect; she felt and acted. "I shall be very happy to dance with you, sir, if you like it," said she, holding out her hand with the most unaffected good-humor. The boy, in one moment restored to all his first delight, looked

joyfully at his mother; and stepping forwards with an honest, simple "Thank you, ma'am," was instantly ready to attend his new acquaintance. The thankfulness of Mrs. Blake was more diffuse; with a look most expressive of unexpected pleasure and lively gratitude, she turned to her neighbor with repeated and fervent acknowledgments of so great and condescending a kindness to her boy. Emma with perfect truth could assure her that she could not be giving greater pleasure than she felt herself; and Charles being provided with his gloves and charged to keep them on, they joined the set which was now rapidly forming, with nearly equal complacency. It was a partnership which could not be noticed without surprise. It gained her a broad stare from Miss Osborne and Miss Carr as they passed her in the dance. "Upon my word, Charles, you are in luck," said the former, as she turned him; "you have got a better partner than me;" to which the happy Charles answered "Yes."

Tom Musgrave, who was dancing with Miss Carr, gave her many inquisitive glances; and after a time Lord Osborne himself came, and under pretence of talking to Charles, stood to look at his partner. Though rather distressed by such observation, Emma could not repent what she had done, so happy had it made both the boy and his mother; the latter of whom was continually making opportunities of addressing her with the warmest civility. Her little partner she found, though bent chiefly on dancing, was not unwilling to speak, when her questions or remarks gave him anything

to say; and she learnt, by a sort of inevitable inquiry, that he had two brothers and a sister, that they and their mamma all lived with his uncle at Wickstead, that his uncle taught him Latin, that he was very fond of riding, and had a horse of his own given him by Lord Osborne; and that he had been out once already with Lord Osborne's hounds.

At the end of these dances Emma found they were to drink tea; Miss Edwards gave her a caution to be at hand, in a manner which convinced her of Mrs. Edwards' holding it very important to have them both close to her when she moved into the tea-room; and Emma was accordingly on the alert to gain her proper station. It was always the pleasure of the company to have a little bustle and crowd when they adjourned for refreshment. The tea-room was a small room within the card-room; and in passing through the latter, where the passage was straitened by tables, Mrs. Edwards and her party were for a few moments hemmed in. It happened close by Lady Osborne's casino-table; Mr. Howard, who belonged to it, spoke to his nephew; and Emma, on perceiving herself the object of attention both to Lady Osborne and him, had just turned away her eyes in time to avoid seeming to hear her young companion exclaim delightedly aloud, "Oh, uncle! do look at my partner; she is so pretty!" As they were immediately in motion again, however, Charles was hurried off without being able to receive his uncle's suffrage. On entering the tea-room, in which two long tables were prepared, Lord Osborne

was to be seen quite alone at the end of one, as if retreating as far as he could from the ball, to enjoy his own thoughts and gape without restraint. Charles instantly pointed him out to Emma. "There 's Lord Osborne; let you and I go and sit by him."

"No, no," said Emma, laughing; "you must sit with my friends."

Charles was now free enough to hazard a few questions in his turn. "What o'clock was it?"

"Eleven."

"Eleven! and I am not at all sleepy. Mamma said I should be asleep before ten. Do you think Miss Osborne will keep her word with me when tea is over?"

"Oh, yes! I suppose so;" though she felt that she had no better reason to give than that Miss Osborne had not kept it before.

"When shall you come to Osborne Castle?"

"Never, probably. I am not acquainted with the family."

"But you may come to Wickstead and see mamma, and she can take you to the castle. There is a monstrous curious stuffed fox there, and a badger; anybody would think they were alive. It is a pity you should not see them."

On rising from tea there was again a scramble for the pleasure of being first out of the room, which happened to be increased by one or two of the card-parties having just broken up, and the players being disposed to move exactly the different way. Among these was Mr. Howard, his sister leaning on his arm; and no sooner were they

within reach of Emma, than Mrs. Blake, calling her notice by a friendly touch, said, "Your goodness to Charles, my dear Miss Watson, brings all his family upon you. Give me leave to introduce my brother." Emma courtesied, the gentleman bowed, made a hasty request for the honor of her hand in the two next dances, to which as hasty an affirmative was given, and they were immediately impelled in opposite directions. Emma was very well pleased with the circumstance; there was a quietly cheerful, gentlemanlike air in Mr. Howard which suited her; and in a few minutes afterwards the value of her engagement increased, when as she was sitting in the card-room, somewhat screened by a door, she heard Lord Osborne, who was lounging on a vacant table near her, call Tom Musgrave towards him and say, "Why do not you dance with that beautiful Emma Watson? I want you to dance with her, and I will come and stand by you."

"I was determined on it this very moment, my lord; I'll be introduced and dance with her directly."

"Ay, do; and if you find she does not want much talking to, you may introduce me by and by."

"Very well, my lord; if she is like her sisters, she will only want to be listened to. I will go this moment. I shall find her in the tea-room. That stiff old Mrs. Edwards has never done tea."

Away he went, Lord Osborne after him; and Emma lost no time in hurrying from her corner exactly the other way, forgetting in her haste that she left Mrs. Edwards behind.

"We had quite lost you," said Mrs. Edwards, who followed her with Mary in less than five minutes. "If you prefer this room to the other, there is no reason why you should not be here; but we had better all be together."

Emma was saved the trouble of apologizing, by their being joined at the moment by Tom Musgrave, who requesting Mrs. Edwards aloud to do him the honor of presenting him to Miss Emma Watson, left that good lady without any choice in the business, but that of testifying by the coldness of her manner that she did it unwillingly. The honor of dancing with her was solicited without loss of time; and Emma, however she might like to be thought a beautiful girl by lord or commoner, was so little disposed to favor Tom Musgrave himself that she had considerable satisfaction in avowing her previous engagement. He was evidently surprised and discomposed. The style of her last partner had probably led him to believe her not overpowered with applications.

"My little friend, Charles Blake," he cried, "must not expect to engross you the whole evening. We can never suffer this. It is against the rules of the assembly, and I am sure it will never be patronized by our good friend here, Mrs. Edwards; she is by much too nice a judge of decorum to give her license to such a dangerous particularity —"

"I am not going to dance with Master Blake, sir!"

The gentleman, a little disconcerted, could only hope he might be fortunate another time, and seem-

ing unwilling to leave her, though his friend, Lord Osborne, was waiting in the doorway for the result, as Emma with some amusement perceived, he began to make civil inquiries after her family.

"How comes it that we have not the pleasure of seeing your sisters here this evening? Our assemblies have been used to be so well treated by them that we do not know how to take this neglect."

"My eldest sister is the only one at home, and she could not leave my father."

"Miss Watson the only one at home! You astonish me! It seems but the day before yesterday that I saw them all three in this town. But I am afraid I have been a very sad neighbor of late. I hear dreadful complaints of my negligence wherever I go, and I confess it is a shameful length of time since I was at Stanton. But I shall now endeavor to make myself amends for the past."

Emma's calm courtesy in reply must have struck him as very unlike the encouraging warmth he had been used to receive from her sisters, and gave him probably the novel sensation of doubting his own influence, and of wishing for more attention than she bestowed. The dancing now recommenced; Miss Carr being impatient to call, everybody was required to stand up; and Tom Musgrave's curiosity was appeased on seeing Mr. Howard come forward and claim Emma's hand.

"That will do as well for me," was Lord Osborne's remark, when his friend carried him the news, and he was continually at Howard's elbow during the two dances.

The frequency of his appearance there was the

only unpleasant part of the engagement, the only objection she could make to Mr. Howard. In himself, she thought him as agreeable as he looked; though chatting on the commonest topics, he had a sensible, unaffected way of expressing himself, which made them all worth hearing, and she only regretted that he had not been able to make his pupil's manners as unexceptionable as his own. The two dances seemed very short, and she had her partner's authority for considering them so. At their conclusion the Osbornes and their train were all on the move.

"We are off at last," said his lordship to Tom. "How much longer do you stay in this heavenly place? — till sunrise? "

"No, faith! my lord; I have had quite enough of it, I assure you. I shall not show myself here again when I have had the honor of attending Lady Osborne to her carriage. I shall retreat in as much secrecy as possible to the most remote corner of the house, where I shall order a barrel of oysters, and be famously snug."

"Let me see you soon at the castle, and bring me word how she looks by daylight."

Emma and Mrs. Blake parted as old acquaintance, and Charles shook her by the hand, and wished her good-by at least a dozen times. From Miss Osborne and Miss Carr she received something like a jerking courtesy as they passed her; even Lady Osborne gave her a look of complacency, and his lordship actually came back, after the others were out of the room, to "beg her pardon," and look in the window-seat behind her for the gloves

which were visibly compressed in his hand. As Tom Musgrave was seen no more, we may suppose his plan to have succeeded, and imagine him mortifying with his barrel of oysters in dreary solitude, or gladly assisting the landlady in her bar to make fresh negus for the happy dancers above. Emma could not help missing the party by whom she had been, though in some respects unpleasantly, distinguished; and the two dances which followed and concluded the ball were rather flat in comparison with the others. Mr. Edwards having played with good luck, they were some of the last in the room.

"Here we are back again, I declare," said Emma, sorrowfully, as she walked into the dining-room, where the table was prepared, and the neat upper maid was lighting the candles.

"My dear Miss Edwards, how soon it is at an end! I wish it could all come over again."

A great deal of kind pleasure was expressed in her having enjoyed the evening so much; and Mr. Edwards was as warm as herself in the praise of the fulness, brilliancy, and spirit of the meeting, though as he had been fixed the whole time at the same table in the same room, with only one change of chairs, it might have seemed a matter scarcely perceived; but he had won four rubbers out of five, and everything went well. His daughter felt the advantage of this gratified state of mind, in the course of the remarks and retrospections which now ensued over the welcome soup.

"How came you not to dance with either of the Mr. Tomlinsons, Mary?" said her mother.

"I was always engaged when they asked me."

"I thought you were to have stood up with Mr. James the two last dances; Mrs. Tomlinson told me he was gone to ask you, and I had heard you say two minutes before that you were not engaged."

"Yes, but there was a mistake; I had misunderstood. I did not know I was engaged. I thought it had been for the two dances after, if we stayed so long; but Captain Hunter assured me it was for those very two."

"So you ended with Captain Hunter, Mary, did you?" said her father. "And whom did you begin with?"

"Captain Hunter," was repeated in a very humble tone.

"Hum! That is being constant, however. But who else did you dance with?"

"Mr. Norton and Mr. Styles."

"And who are they?"

"Mr. Norton is a cousin of Captain Hunter's."

"And who is Mr. Styles?"

"One of his particular friends."

"All in the same regiment," added Mrs. Edwards. "Mary was surrounded by red-coats all the evening. I should have been better pleased to see her dancing with some of our old neighbors, I confess."

"Yes, yes; we must not neglect our old neighbors. But if these soldiers are quicker than other people in a ball-room, what are young ladies to do?"

"I think there is no occasion for their engaging

themselves so many dances before hand, Mr. Edwards."

"No, perhaps not; but I remember, my dear, when you and I did the same."

Mrs. Edwards said no more, and Mary breathed again. A good deal of good-humored pleasantry followed; and Emma went to bed in charming spirits, her head full of Osbornes, Blakes, and Howards.

The next morning brought a great many visitors. It was the way of the place always to call on Mrs. Edwards the morning after a ball, and this neighborly inclination was increased in the present instance by a general spirit of curiosity on Emma's account, as everybody wanted to look again at the girl who had been admired the night before by Lord Osborne. Many were the eyes, and various the degrees of approbation with which she was examined. Some saw no fault, and some no beauty. With some her brown skin was the annihilation of every grace, and others could never be persuaded that she was half so handsome as Elizabeth Watson had been ten years ago. The morning passed quickly away in discussing the merits of the ball with all this succession of company; and Emma was at once astonished by finding it two o'clock, and considering that she had heard nothing of her father's chair. After this discovery she had walked twice to the window to examine the street, and was on the point of asking leave to ring the bell and make inquiries, when the light sound of a carriage driving up to the door set her heart at ease. She stepped again to the window, but

instead of the convenient though very un-smart family equipage perceived a neat curricle. Mr. Musgrave was shortly afterwards announced, and Mrs. Edwards put on her very stiffest look at the sound. Not at all dismayed, however, by her chilling air, he paid his compliments to each of the ladies with no unbecoming ease, and continuing to address Emma, presented her a note, which "he had the honor of bringing from her sister, but to which he must observe a verbal postscript from himself would be requisite."

The note, which Emma was beginning to read rather before Mrs. Edwards had entreated her to use no ceremony, contained a few lines from Elizabeth importing that their father, in consequence of being unusually well, had taken the sudden resolution of attending the visitation that day, and that as his road lay quite wide from D., it was impossible for her to come home till the following morning, unless the Edwards would send her, which was hardly to be expected, or she could meet with any chance conveyance, or did not mind walking so far. She had scarcely run her eye through the whole, before she found herself obliged to listen to Tom Musgrave's further account.

"I received that note from the fair hands of Miss Watson only ten minutes ago," said he; "I met her in the village of Stanton, whither my good stars prompted me to turn my horses' heads. She was at that moment in quest of a person to employ on the errand, and I was fortunate enough to convince her that she could not find a more

willing or speedy messenger than myself. Remember, I say nothing of my disinterestedness. My reward is to be the indulgence of conveying you to Stanton in my curricle. Though they are not written down, I bring your sister's orders for the same."

Emma felt distressed; she did not like the proposal, — she did not wish to be on terms of intimacy with the proposer; and yet, fearful of encroaching on the Edwards, as well as wishing to go home herself, she was at a loss how entirely to decline what he offered. Mrs. Edwards continued silent, either not understanding the case, or waiting to see how the young lady's inclination lay. Emma thanked him, but professed herself very unwilling to give him so much trouble. "The trouble was of course honor, pleasure, delight, — what had he or his horses to do?" Still she hesitated, — "She believed she must beg leave to decline his assistance; she was rather afraid of the sort of carriage. The distance was not beyond a walk." Mrs. Edward was silent no longer. She inquired into the particulars, and then said, "We shall be extremely happy, Miss Emma, if you can give us the pleasure of your company till to-morrow; but if you cannot conveniently do so, our carriage is quite at your service, and Mary will be pleased with the opportunity of seeing your sister."

This was precisely what Emma had longed for, and she accepted the offer most thankfully, acknowledging that as Elizabeth was entirely alone, it was her wish to return home to dinner. The plan was warmly opposed by their visitor, —

"I cannot suffer it, indeed. I must not be deprived of the happiness of escorting you. I assure you there is not a possibility of fear with my horses. You might guide them yourself. Your sisters all know how quiet they are; they have none of them the smallest scruple in trusting themselves with me, even on a race-course. Believe me," added he, lowering his voice, "you are quite safe, — the danger is only mine."

Emma was not more disposed to oblige him for all this.

"And as to Mrs. Edwards' carriage being used the day after a ball, it is a thing quite out of rule, I assure you, — never heard of before. The old coachman will look as black as his horses, — won't he, Miss Edwards?"

No notice was taken. The ladies were silently firm, and the gentleman found himself obliged to submit.

"What a famous ball we had last night!" he cried, after a short pause. "How long did you keep it up after the Osbornes and I went away?"

"We had two dances more."

"It is making it too much of a fatigue, I think, to stay so late. I suppose your set was not a very full one."

"Yes; quite as full as ever, except the Osbornes. There seemed no vacancy anywhere; and everybody danced with uncommon spirit to the very last."

Emma said this, though against her conscience.

"Indeed! perhaps I might have looked in upon you again, if I had been aware of as much; for I

am rather fond of dancing than not. Miss Osborne is a charming girl, is not she?"

"I do not think her handsome," replied Emma, to whom all this was chiefly addressed.

"Perhaps she is not critically handsome, but her manners are delightful. And Fanny Carr is a most interesting little creature. You can imagine nothing more *naïve* or *piquante;* and what do you think of Lord Osborne, Miss Watson?"

"He would be handsome even though he were not a lord, and perhaps, better bred; more desirous of pleasing and showing himself pleased in a right place."

"Upon my word, you are severe upon my friend! I assure you Lord Osborne is a very good fellow."

"I do not dispute his virtues, but I do not like his careless air."

"If it were not a breach of confidence," replied Tom, with an important look, "perhaps I might be able to win a more favorable opinion of poor Osborne."

Emma gave him no encouragement, and he was obliged to keep his friend's secret. He was also obliged to put an end to his visit, for Mrs. Edwards having ordered her carriage, there was no time to be lost on Emma's side in preparing for it. Miss Edwards accompanied her home; but as it was dinner-hour at Stanton, stayed with them only a few minutes.

"Now, my dear Emma," said Miss Watson, as soon as they were alone, "you must talk to me all the rest of the day without stopping, or I shall not be satisfied; but, first of all, Nanny shall bring in

the dinner. Poor thing! You will not dine as you did yesterday, for we have nothing but some fried beef. How nice Mary Edwards looks in her new pelisse! And now tell me how you like them all, and what I am to say to Sam. I have begun my letter; Jack Stokes is to call for it to-morrow, for his uncle is going within a mile of Guildford next day."

Nanny brought in the dinner.

"We will wait upon ourselves," continued Elizabeth, "and then we shall lose no time. And so you would not come home with Tom Musgrave?"

"No, you had said so much against him that I could not wish either for the obligation or the intimacy which the use of his carriage must have created. I should not even have liked the appearance of it."

"You did very right; though I wonder at your forbearance, and I do not think I could have done it myself. He seemed so eager to fetch you that I could not say no, though it rather went against me to be throwing you together, so well as I knew his tricks; but I did long to see you, and it was a clever way of getting you home. Besides, it won't do to be too nice. Nobody could have thought of the Edwards letting you have their coach, after the horses being out so late. But what am I to say to Sam?"

"If you are guided by me, you will not encourage him to think of Miss Edwards. The father is decidedly against him, the mother shows him no favor, and I doubt his having any interest with

Mary. She danced twice with Captain Hunter, and I think shows him in general as much encouragement as is consistent with her disposition and the circumstances she is placed in. She once mentioned Sam, and certainly with a little confusion; but that was perhaps merely owing to the consciousness of his liking her, which may very probably have come to her knowledge."

"Oh, dear! yes. She has heard enough of that from us all. Poor Sam! he is out of luck as well as other people. For the life of me, Emma, I cannot help feeling for those that are crossed in love. Well, now begin, and give me an account of everything as it happened."

Emma obeyed her, and Elizabeth listened with very little interruption till she heard of Mr. Howard as a partner.

"Dance with Mr. Howard! Good heavens! you don't say so! Why he is quite one of the great and grand ones. Did you not find him very high?"

"His manners are of a kind to give me much more ease and confidence than Tom Musgrave's."

"Well, go on. I should have been frightened out of my wits to have had anything to do with the Osbornes' set."

Emma concluded her narration.

"And so you really did not dance with Tom Musgrave at all; but you must have liked him, — you must have been struck with him altogether."

"I do not like him, Elizabeth. I allow his person and air to be good, and that his manners to a certain point — his address rather — is pleasing; but I see nothing else to admire in him. On the

contrary, he seems very vain, very conceited, absurdly anxious for distinction, and absolutely contemptible in some of the measures he takes for being so. There is a ridiculousness about him that entertains me; but his company gives me no other agreeable emotion."

"My dearest Emma! you are like nobody else in the world. It is well Margaret is not by. You do not offend me, though I hardly know how to believe you; but Margaret would never forgive such words."

"I wish Margaret could have heard him profess his ignorance of her being out of the country; he declared it seemed only two days since he had seen her."

"Ay, that is just like him; and yet this is the man she will fancy so desperately in love with her. He is no favorite of mine, as you well know, Emma; but you must think him agreeable. Can you lay your hand on your heart, and say you do not?"

"Indeed, I can, both hands; and spread them to their widest extent."

"I should like to know the man you do think agreeable."

"His name is Howard."

"Howard! Dear me; I cannot think of him but as playing cards with Lady Osborne, and looking proud. I must own, however, that it is a relief to me to find you can speak as you do of Tom Musgrave. My heart did misgive me that you would like him too well. You talked so stoutly beforehand, that I was sadly afraid your

brag would be punished. I only hope it will last, and that he will not come on to pay you much attention. It is a hard thing for a woman to stand against the flattering ways of a man when he is bent upon pleasing her."

As their quietly sociable little meal concluded, Miss Watson could not help observing how comfortably it had passed.

"It is so delightful to me," said she, "to have things going on in peace and good-humor. Nobody can tell how much I hate quarrelling. Now, though we have had nothing but fried beef, how good it has all seemed! I wish everybody were as easily satisfied as you; but poor Margaret is very snappish, and Penelope owns she would rather have quarrelling going on than nothing at all."

Mr. Watson returned in the evening not the worse for the exertion of the day, and, consequently, pleased with what he had done, and glad to talk of it over his own fireside. Emma had not foreseen any interest to herself in the occurrences of a visitation; but when she heard Mr. Howard spoken of as the preacher, and as having given them an excellent sermon, she could not help listening with a quicker ear.

"I do not know when I have heard a discourse more to my mind," continued Mr. Watson, "or one better delivered. He reads extremely well, with great propriety, and in a very impressive manner, and at the same time without any theatrical grimace or violence. I own I do not like much action in the pulpit; I do not like the studied air and artificial inflexions of voice which

your very popular and most admired preachers generally have. A simple delivery is much better calculated to inspire devotion, and shows a much better taste. Mr. Howard read like a scholar and a gentleman."

"And what had you for dinner, sir?" said his eldest daughter.

He related the dishes, and told what he had ate himself.

"Upon the whole," he added, "I have had a very comfortable day. My old friends were quite surprised to see me amongst them, and I must say that everybody paid me great attention, and seemed to feel for me as an invalid. They would make me sit near the fire; and as the partridges were pretty high, Dr. Richards would have them sent away to the other end of the table, "that they might not offend Mr. Watson," which I thought very kind of him. But what pleased me as much as anything was Mr. Howard's attention. There is a pretty steep flight of steps up to the room we dine in, which do not quite agree with my gouty foot; and Mr. Howard walked by me from the bottom to the top, and would make me take his arm. It struck me as very becoming in so young a man; but I am sure I had no claim to expect it, for I never saw him before in my life. By the by, he inquired after one of my daughters; but I do not know which. I suppose you know among yourselves."

On the third day after the ball, as Nanny, at five minutes before three, was beginning to bustle

into the parlor with the tray and knife-case, she was suddenly called to the front door by the sound of as smart a rap as the end of a riding-whip could give; and though charged by Miss Watson to let nobody in, returned in half a minute with a look of awkward dismay to hold the parlor door open for Lord Osborne and Tom Musgrave. The surprise of the young ladies may be imagined. No visitors would have been welcome at such a moment, but such visitors as these, — such an one as Lord Osborne at least, a nobleman and a stranger, was really distressing.

He looked a little embarrassed himself, as, on being introduced by his easy, voluble friend, he muttered something of doing himself the honor of waiting upon Mr. Watson. Though Emma could not but take the compliment of the visit to herself, she was very far from enjoying it. She felt all the inconsistency of such an acquaintance with the very humble style in which they were obliged to live; and having in her aunt's family been used to many of the elegancies of life, was fully sensible of all that must be open to the ridicule of richer people in her present home. Of the pain of such feelings, Elizabeth knew very little. Her simple mind, or juster reason, saved her from such mortification; and though shrinking under a general sense of inferiority, she felt no particular shame. Mr. Watson, as the gentleman had already heard from Nanny, was not well enough to be down-stairs. With much concern they took their seats; Lord Osborne near Emma, and the convenient Mr. Musgrave, in high spirits at his

own importance, on the other side of the fireplace, with Elizabeth. He was at no loss for words; but when Lord Osborne had hoped that Emma had not caught cold at the ball, he had nothing more to say for some time, and could only gratify his eye by occasional glances at his fair companion. Emma was not inclined to give herself much trouble for his entertainment; and after hard labor of mind, he produced the remark of its being a very fine day, and followed it up with the question of, "Have you been walking this morning?"

"No, my lord; we thought it too dirty."

"You should wear half-boots." After another pause: "Nothing sets off a neat ankle more than a half-boot; nankeen, galoshed with black, looks very well. Do not you like half-boots?"

"Yes; but unless they are so stout as to injure their beauty, they are not fit for country walking."

"Ladies should ride in dirty weather. Do you ride?"

"No, my lord."

"I wonder every lady does not; a woman never looks better than on horseback."

"But every woman may not have the inclination or the means."

"If they knew how much it became them, they would all have the inclination; and I fancy, Miss Watson, when once they had the inclination, the means would soon follow."

"Your lordship thinks we always have our own way. That is a point on which ladies and gentle-

men have long disagreed; but without pretending to decide it, I may say that there are some circumstances which even women cannot control. Female economy will do a great deal, my lord; but it cannot turn a small income into a large one."

Lord Osborne was silenced. Her manner had been neither sententious nor sarcastic; but there was a something in its mild seriousness, as well as in the words themselves, which made his lordship think; and when he addressed her again, it was with a degree of considerate propriety totally unlike the half-awkward, half-fearless style of his former remarks. It was a new thing with him to wish to please a woman; it was the first time that he had ever felt what was due to a woman in Emma's situation; but as he was wanting neither in sense nor a good disposition, he did not feel it without effect.

"You have not been long in this country, I understand," said he, in the tone of a gentleman. "I hope you are pleased with it."

He was rewarded by a gracious answer, and a more liberal full view of her face than she had yet bestowed. Unused to exert himself, and happy in contemplating her, he then sat in silence for some minutes longer, while Tom Musgrave was chattering to Elizabeth; till they were interrupted by Nanny's approach, who, half-opening the door and putting in her head, said, —

"Please, ma'am, master wants to know why he be n't to have his dinner?"

The gentlemen, who had hitherto disregarded every symptom, however positive, of the nearness

of that meal, now jumped up with apologies, while Elizabeth called briskly after Nanny to take up the fowls.

"I am sorry it happens so," she added, turning good-humoredly towards Musgrave, "but you know what early hours we keep."

Tom had nothing to say for himself; he knew it very well, and such honest simplicity, such shameless truth, rather bewildered him. Lord Osborne's parting compliments took some time, his inclination for speech seeming to increase with the shortness of the term for indulgence. He recommended exercise in defiance of dirt; spoke again in praise of half-boots; begged that his sister might be allowed to send Emma the name of her shoemaker; and concluded with saying, "My hounds will be hunting this country next week. I believe they will throw off at Stanton Wood on Wednesday, at nine o'clock. I mention this in hopes of your being drawn out to see what 's going on. If the morning 's tolerable, pray do us the honor of giving us your good wishes in person."

The sisters looked on each other with astonishment when their visitors had withdrawn.

"Here 's an unaccountable honor!" cried Elizabeth, at last. "Who would have thought of Lord Osborne's coming to Stanton? He is very handsome; but Tom Musgrave looks all to nothing the smartest and most fashionable man of the two. I am glad he did not say anything to me; I would not have had to talk to such a great man for the world. Tom was very agreeable, was not he? But did you hear him ask where Miss Penelope and

Miss Margaret were, when he first came in? It put me out of patience. I am glad Nanny had not laid the cloth, however, — it would have looked so awkward; just the tray did not signify." To say that Emma was not flattered by Lord Osborne's visit would be to assert a very unlikely thing and describe a very odd young lady; but the gratification was by no means unalloyed: his coming was a sort of notice which might please her vanity, but did not suit her pride; and she would rather have known that he wished the visit without presuming to make it, than have seen him at Stanton.

Among other unsatisfactory feelings it once occurred to her to wonder why Mr. Howard had not taken the same privilege of coming, and accompanied his lordship; but she was willing to suppose that he had either known nothing about it, or had declined any share in a measure which carried quite as much impertinence in its form as good-breeding. Mr. Watson was very far from being delighted when he heard what had passed; a little peevish under immediate pain, and ill-disposed to be pleased, he only replied, —

"Pooh! pooh! what occasion could there be for Lord Osborne's coming? I have lived here fourteen years without being noticed by any of the family. It is some fooling of that idle fellow, Tom Musgrave. I cannot return the visit. I would not if I could." And when Tom Musgrave was met with again, he was commissioned with a message of excuse to Osborne Castle, on the too-sufficient plea of Mr. Watson's infirm state of health.

A week or ten days rolled quietly away after this

visit before any new bustle arose to interrupt even for half a day the tranquil and affectionate intercourse of the two sisters, whose mutual regard was increasing with the intimate knowledge of each other which such intercourse produced. The first circumstance to break in on their security was the receipt of a letter from Croydon to announce the speedy return of Margaret, and a visit of two or three days from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Watson, who undertook to bring her home, and wished to see their sister Emma.

It was an expectation to fill the thoughts of the sisters at Stanton and to busy the hours of one of them at least; for, as Jane had been a woman of fortune, the preparations for her entertainment were considerable; and as Elizabeth had at all times more goodwill than method in her guidance of the house, she could make no change without a bustle. An absence of fourteen years had made all her brothers and sisters strangers to Emma, but in her expectation of Margaret there was more than the awkwardness of such an alienation; she had heard things which made her dread her return; and the day which brought the party to Stanton seemed to her the probable conclusion of almost all that had been comfortable in the house.

Robert Watson was an attorney at Croydon, in a good way of business; very well satisfied with himself for the same, and for having married the only daughter of the attorney to whom he had been clerk, with a fortune of six thousand pounds. Mrs. Robert was not less pleased with herself for having had that six thousand pounds and for being

now in possession of a very smart house in Croydon, where she gave genteel parties and wore fine clothes. In her person there was nothing remarkable; her manners were pert and conceited. Margaret was not without beauty; she had a slight pretty figure, and rather wanted countenance than good features; but the sharp and anxious expression of her face made her beauty in general little felt. On meeting her long-absent sister, as on every occasion of show, her manner was all affection and her voice all gentleness; continual smiles and a very slow articulation being her constant resource when determined on pleasing.

She was now "so delighted to see dear, dear Emma," that she could hardly speak a word in a minute.

"I am sure we shall be great friends," she observed with much sentiment, as they were sitting together. Emma scarcely knew how to answer such a proposition, and the manner in which it was spoken she could not attempt to equal. Mrs. Robert Watson eyed her with much familiar curiosity and triumphant compassion: the loss of the aunt's fortune was uppermost in her mind at the moment of meeting; and she could not but feel how much better it was to be the daughter of a gentleman of property in Croydon than the niece of an old woman who threw herself away on an Irish captain. Robert was carelessly kind, as became a prosperous man and a brother; more intent on settling with the post-boy, inveighing against the exorbitant advance in posting, and pondering over a doubtful half-crown, than on

welcoming a sister who was no longer likely to have any property for him to get the direction of.

"Your road through the village is infamous, Elizabeth," said he; "worse than ever it was. By Heaven! I would indict it if I lived near you. Who is surveyor now?"

There was a little niece at Croydon to be fondly inquired after by the kind-hearted Elizabeth, who regretted very much her not being of the party.

"You are very good," replied her mother, "and I assure you it went very hard with Augusta to have us come away without her. I was forced to say we were only going to church, and promise to come back for her directly. But you know it would not do to bring her without her maid, and I am as particular as ever in having her properly attended to."

"Sweet little darling!" cried Margaret. "It quite broke my heart to leave her."

"Then why was you in such a hurry to run away from her?" cried Mrs. Robert. "You are a sad, shabby girl. I have been quarrelling with you all the way we came, have not I? Such a visit as this I never heard of! You know how glad we are to have any of you with us, if it be for months together; and I am sorry (with a witty smile) we have not been able to make Croydon agreeable this autumn."

"My dearest Jane, do not overpower me with your raillery. You know what inducements I had to bring me home. Spare me, I entreat you. I am no match for your arch sallies."

"Well, I only beg you will not set your neigh-

bors against the place. Perhaps Emma may be tempted to go back with us and stay till Christmas, if you don't put in your word."

Emma was greatly obliged. "I assure you we have very good society at Croydon. I do not much attend the balls, they are rather too mixed; but our parties are very select and good. I had seven tables last week in my drawing-room."

"Are you fond of the country? How do you like Stanton?"

"Very much," replied Emma, who thought a comprehensive answer most to the purpose. She saw that her sister-in-law despised her immediately. Mrs. Robert Watson was indeed wondering what sort of a home Emma could possibly hav been used to in Shropshire, and setting it down as certain that the aunt could never have had six thousand pounds.

"How charming Emma is," whispered Margaret to Mrs. Robert, in her most languishing tone. Emma was quite distressed by such behavior; and she did not like it better when she heard Margaret five minutes afterwards say to Elizabeth in a sharp, quick accent, totally unlike the first, "Have you heard from Pen since she went to Chichester? I had a letter the other day. I don't find she is likely to make anything of it. I fancy she 'll come back 'Miss Penelope,' as she went."

Such she feared would be Margaret's common voice when the novelty of her own appearance were over; the tone of artificial sensibility was not recommended by the idea. The ladies were invited upstairs to prepare for dinner.

"I hope you will find things tolerably comfortable, Jane," said Elizabeth, as she opened the door of the spare bedchamber.

"My good creature," replied Jane, "use no ceremony with me, I entreat you. I am one of those who always take things as they find them. I hope I can put up with a small apartment for two or three nights without making a piece of work. I always wish to be treated quite *en famille* when I come to see you. And now I do hope you have not been getting a great dinner for us. Remember we never eat suppers."

"I suppose," said Margaret, rather quickly to Emma, "you and I are to be together; Elizabeth always takes care to have a room to herself."

"No. Elizabeth gives me half hers."

"Oh!" in a softened voice, and rather mortified to find that she was not ill-used.

"I am sorry I am not to have the pleasure of your company, especially as it makes me nervous to be much alone."

Emma was the first of the females in the parlor again; on entering it she found her brother alone.

"So Emma," said he, "you are quite a stranger at home. It must seem odd enough for you to be here. A pretty piece of work your Aunt Turner has made of it! By Heaven! a woman should never be trusted with money. I always said she ought to have settled something on you, as soon as her husband died."

"But that would have been trusting me with money," replied Emma; "and I am a woman too."

"It might have been secured to your future use, without your having any power over it now. What a blow it must have been upon you! To find yourself, instead of heiress of 8,000*l.* or 9,000*l.*, sent back a weight upon your family, without a sixpence. I hope the old woman will smart for it."

"Do not speak disrespectfully of her; she was very good to me, and if she has made an imprudent choice, she will suffer more from it herself than I can possibly do."

"I do not mean to distress you, but you know everybody must think her an old fool. I thought Turner had been reckoned an extraordinarily sensible, clever man. How the devil came he to make such a will?"

"My uncle's sense is not at all impeached in my opinion by his attachment to my aunt. She had been an excellent wife to him. The most liberal and enlightened minds are always the most confiding. The event has been unfortunate; but my uncle's memory is, if possible, endeared to me by such a proof of tender respect for my aunt."

"That 's odd sort of talking. He might have provided decently for his widow, without leaving everything that he had to dispose of, or any part of it, at her mercy."

"My aunt may have erred," said Emma, warmly; "she has erred, but my uncle's conduct was faultless: I was her own niece, and he left to her the power of providing for me."

"But unluckily she has left the pleasure of providing for you to your father, and without the

power. That 's the long and short of the business. After keeping you at a distance from your family for such a length of time as must do away all natural affection among us, and breeding you up (I suppose) in a superior style, you are returned upon their hands without a sixpence."

"You know," replied Emma, struggling with her tears, "my uncle's melancholy state of health. He was a greater invalid than my father. He could not leave home."

"I do not mean to make you cry," said Robert, rather softened, — and after a short silence, by way of changing the subject, he added: "I am just come from my father's room; he seems very indifferent. It will be a sad break up when he dies. Pity you can none of you get married! You must come to Croydon as well as the rest, and see what you can do there. I believe if Margaret had had a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds, there was a young man who would have thought of her."

Emma was glad when they were joined by the others; it was better to look at her sister-in-law's finery than listen to Robert, who had equally irritated and grieved her. Mrs. Robert, exactly as smart as she had been at her own party, came in with apologies for her dress.

"I would not make you wait," said she; "so I put on the first thing I met with. I am afraid I am a sad figure. My dear Mr. W. (addressing her husband), you have not put any fresh powder in your hair."

"No, I do not intend it. I think there is

powder enough in my hair for my wife and sisters."

"Indeed, you ought to make some alteration in your dress before dinner when you are out visiting, though you do not at home."

"Nonsense."

"It is very odd you do not like to do what other gentlemen do. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Hemming change their dress every day of their lives before dinner. And what was the use of my putting up your last new coat, if you are never to wear it?"

"Do be satisfied with being fine yourself, and leave your husband alone."

To put an end to this altercation and soften the evident vexation of her sister-in-law, Emma (though in no spirits to make such nonsense easy), began to admire her gown. It produced immediate complacency.

"Do you like it?" said she. "I am very happy. It has been excessively admired; but sometimes I think the pattern too large. I shall wear one to-morrow which I think you will prefer to this. Have you seen the one I gave Margaret?"

Dinner came, and except when Mrs. Robert looked at her husband's head, she continued gay and flippant, chiding Elizabeth for the profusion on the table, and absolutely protesting against the entrance of the roast turkey, which formed the only exception to "You see your dinner." "I do beg and entreat that no turkey may be seen to-day. I am really frightened out of my wits with the number of dishes we have already. Let us have no turkey, I beseech you."

"My dear," replied Elizabeth, "the turkey is roasted, and it may just as well come in as stay in the kitchen. Besides, if it is cut, I am in hopes my father may be tempted to eat a bit, for it is rather a favorite dish."

"You may have it in, my dear; but I assure you I sha'n't touch it."

Mr. Watson had not been well enough to join the party at dinner, but was prevailed on to come down and drink tea with them.

"I wish he may be able to have a game of cards, to-night," said Elizabeth to Mrs. Robert, after seeing her father comfortably seated in his arm-chair.

"Not on my account, my dear, I beg. You know I am no card-player. I think a snug chat infinitely better. I always say cards are very well sometimes to break a formal circle, but one never wants them among friends."

"I was thinking of it's being something to amuse my father," said Elizabeth, "if it was not disagreeable to you. He says his head won't bear whist, but perhaps if we make a round game he may be tempted to sit down with us."

"By all means, my dear creature, I am quite at your service; only do not oblige me to choose the game, that's all. Speculation is the only round game at Croydon now, but I can play anything. When there is only one or two of you at home, you must be quite at a loss to amuse him. Why do you not get him to play at cribbage? Margaret and I have played at cribbage most nights that we have not been engaged."

A sound like a distant carriage was at this moment caught: everybody listened; it became more decided; it certainly drew nearer. It was an unusual sound for Stanton at any time of the day, for the village was on no very public road, and contained no gentleman's family but the rector's. The wheels rapidly approached; in two minutes the general expectation was answered; they stopped beyond a doubt at the garden-gate of the parsonage. Who could it be? It was certainly a postchaise. Penelope was the only creature to be thought of; she might perhaps have met with some unexpected opportunity of returning. A pause of suspense ensued. Steps were distinguished along the paved footway, which led under the window of the house to the front door, and then within the passage. They were the steps of a man. It could not be Penelope. It must be Samuel. The door opened, and displayed Tom Musgrave in the wrap of a traveller. He had been in London, and was now on his way home, and he had come half-a-mile out of his road merely to call for ten minutes at Stanton. He loved to take people by surprise with sudden visits at extraordinary seasons, and, in the present instance, he had the additional motive of being able to tell the Miss Watsons, whom he depended on finding sitting quietly employed after tea, that he was going home to an eight-o'clock dinner.

As it happened, he did not give more surprise than he received, when, instead of being shown into the usual little sitting-room, the door of the

best parlor (a foot larger each way than the other) was thrown open, and he beheld a circle of smart people whom he could not immediately recognize, arranged with all the honors of visiting round the fire, and Miss Watson seated at the best Pembroke table, with the best tea-things before her. He stood a few seconds in silent amazement. "Musgrave," ejaculated Margaret, in a tender voice. He recollected himself, and came forward, delighted to find such a circle of friends, and blessing his good fortune for the unlooked-for indulgence. He shook hands with Robert, bowed and smiled to the ladies, and did everything very prettily; but as to any particularity of address or emotion towards Margaret, Emma, who closely observed him, perceived nothing that did not justify Elizabeth's opinion, though Margaret's modest smiles imported that she meant to take the visit to herself. He was persuaded without much difficulty to throw off his great-coat and drink tea with them. For "whether he dined at eight or nine," as he observed, "was a matter of very little consequence;" and without seeming to seek, he did not turn away from the chair close by Margaret, which she was assiduous in providing him. She had thus secured him from her sisters, but it was not immediately in her power to preserve him from her brother's claims; for as he came avowedly from London, and had left it only four hours ago, the last current report as to public news, and the general opinion of the day, must be understood before Robert could let his attention be yielded to the less rational and im-

portant demands of the women. At last, however, he was at liberty to hear Margaret's soft address, as she spoke her fears of his having had a most terrible cold, dark, dreadful journey.

"Indeed, you should not have set out so late."

"I could not be earlier," he replied. "I was detained chatting at the Bedford by a friend. All hours are alike to me. How long have you been in the country, Miss Margaret?"

"We only came this morning; my kind brother and sister brought me home this very morning. 'T is singular, — is it not?"

"You were gone a great while, were not you? A fortnight, I suppose ?"

"You may call a fortnight a great while, Mr. Musgrave," said Mrs. Robert, sharply; "but we think a month very little. I assure you we bring her home at the end of a month much against our will."

"A month! Have you really been gone a month? 'T is amazing how time flies."

"You may imagine," said Margaret, in a sort of whisper, "what are my sensations in finding myself once more at Stanton; you know what a sad visitor I make. And I was so excessively impatient to see Emma; I dreaded the meeting, and at the same time longed for it. Do you not comprehend the sort of feeling?"

"Not at all," cried he, aloud: "I could never dread a meeting with Miss Emma Watson, or any of her sisters."

It was lucky that he added that finish.

"Were you speaking to me?" said Emma, who had caught her own name.

"Not absolutely," he answered; "but I was thinking of you, as many at a greater distance are probably doing at this moment. Fine open weather, Miss Emma, — charming season for hunting."

"Emma is delightful, is not she?" whispered Margaret; "I have found her more than answer my warmest hopes. Did you ever see anything more perfectly beautiful? I think even you must be a convert to a brown complexion."

He hesitated. Margaret was fair herself, and he did not particularly want to compliment her; but Miss Osborne and Miss Carr were likewise fair, and his devotion to them carried the day.

"Your sister's complexion," said he, at last, "is as fine as a dark complexion can be; but I still profess my preference of a white skin. You have seen Miss Osborne? She is my model for a truly feminine complexion, and she is very fair."

"Is she fairer than me?"

Tom made no reply. "Upon my honor, ladies," said he, giving a glance over his own person, "I am highly indebted to your condescension for admitting me in such dishabille into your drawing-room. I really did not consider how unfit I was to be here, or I hope I should have kept my distance. Lady Osborne would tell me that I was growing as careless as her son if she saw me in this condition."

The ladies were not wanting in civil returns, and

Robert Watson, stealing a view of his own head in an opposite glass, said with equal civility, —

"You cannot be more in dishabille than myself. We got here so late that I had not time even to put a little fresh powder into my hair."

Emma could not help entering into what she supposed her sister-in-law's feelings at the moment.

When the tea-things were removed, Tom began to talk of his carriage; but the old card-table being set out, and the fish and counters, with a tolerably clean pack brought forward from the buffet by Miss Watson, the general voice was so urgent with him to join their party that he agreed to allow himself another quarter of an hour. Even Emma was pleased that he would stay, for she was beginning to feel that a family party might be the worst of all parties; and the others were delighted.

"What's your game?" cried he, as they stood round the table.

"Speculation, I believe," said Elizabeth. "My sister recommends it, and I fancy we all like it. I know you do, Tom."

"It is the only round game played at Croydon now," said Mrs. Robert; "we never think of any other. I am glad it is a favorite with you."

"Oh, me!" said Tom. "Whatever you decide on will be a favorite with me. I have had some pleasant hours at speculation in my time; but I have not been in the way of it for a long while. Vingt-un is the game at Osborne Castle. I have played nothing but vingt-un of late. You would be astonished to hear the noise we make there — the fine old lofty drawing-room rings again. Lady

Osborne sometimes declares she cannot hear herself speak. Lord Osborne enjoys it famously, and he makes the best dealer without exception that I ever beheld, — such quickness and spirit, he lets nobody dream over their cards. I wish you could see him overdraw himself on both his own cards. It is worth anything in the world!"

"Dear me!" cried Margaret, "why should not we play vingt-un? I think it is a much better game than speculation. I cannot say I am very fond of speculation."

Mrs. Robert offered not another word in support of the game. She was quite vanquished, and the fashions of Osborne Castle carried it over the fashions of Croydon.

"Do you see much of the parsonage family at the castle, Mr. Musgrave?" said Emma, as they were taking their seats.

"Oh yes; they are almost always there. Mrs. Blake is a nice little good-humored woman; she and I are sworn friends; and Howard 's a very gentlemanlike, good sort of fellow. You are not forgotten, I assure you, by any of the party. I fancy you must have a little cheek-glowing now and then, Miss Emma. Were not you rather warm last Saturday about nine or ten o'clock in the evening? I will tell you how it was, — I see you are dying to know. Says Howard to Lord Osborne —"

At this interesting moment he was called on by the others to regulate the game, and determine some disputable point; and his attention was so totally engaged in the business, and afterward by the course of the game, as never to revert to what

he had been saying before; and Emma, though suffering a good deal from curiosity, dared not remind him.

He proved a very useful addition at their table. Without him it would have been a party of such very near relations as could have felt little interest, and perhaps maintained little complaisance; but his presence gave variety and secured good manners. He was, in fact, excellently qualified to shine at a round game, and few situations made him appear to greater advantage. He played with spirit, and had a great deal to say; and, though no wit himself, could sometimes make use of the wit of an absent friend, and had a lively way of retailing a common-place or saying a mere nothing, that had great effect at a card-table. The ways and good jokes of Osborne Castle were now added to his ordinary means of entertainment. He repeated the smart sayings of one lady, detailed the oversights of another, and indulged them even with a copy of Lord Osborne's overdrawing himself on both cards.

The clock struck nine while he was thus agreeably occupied; and when Nanny came in with her master's basin of gruel, he had the pleasure of observing to Mr. Watson that he should leave him at supper while he went home to dinner himself. The carriage was ordered to the door, and no entreaties for his staying longer could now avail; for he well knew that if he stayed he would have to sit down to supper in less than ten minutes, which to a man whose heart had been long fixed on calling his next meal a dinner, was quite insupportable. On finding him determined to go, Mar-

garet began to wink and nod at Elizabeth to ask him to dinner for the following day, and Elizabeth at last, not able to resist hints which her own hospitable social temper more than half seconded, gave the invitation: "Would he give Robert the meeting, they should be very happy?"

"With the greatest pleasure," was his first reply. In a moment afterwards, "That is, if I can possibly get here in time; but I shoot with Lord Osborne, and therefore must not engage. You will not think of me unless you see me." And so he departed, delighted in the uncertainty in which he had left it.

Margaret, in the joy of her heart, under circumstances which she chose to consider as peculiarly propitious, would willingly have made a confidante of Emma when they were alone for a short time the next morning, and had proceeded so far as to say, "The young man who was here last night, my dear Emma, and returns to-day, is more interesting to me than perhaps you may be aware;" but Emma, pretending to understand nothing extraordinary in the words, made some very inapplicable reply, and jumping up, ran away from a subject which was odious to her. As Margaret would not allow a doubt to be repeated of Musgrave's coming to dinner, preparations were made for his entertainment much exceeding what had been deemed necessary the day before; and taking the office of superintendence entirely from her sister, she was half the morning in the kitchen herself, directing and scolding.

After a great deal of indifferent cooking and anxious suspense, however, they were obliged to sit down without their guest. Tom Musgrave never came; and Margaret was at no pains to conceal her vexation under the disappointment, or repress the peevishness of her temper. The peace of the party for the remainder of that day and the whole of the next, which comprised the length of Robert and Jane's visit, was continually invaded by her fretful displeasure and querulous attacks. Elizabeth was the usual object of both. Margaret had just respect enough for her brother's and sister's opinion to behave properly by them, but Elizabeth and the maids could never do right; and Emma, whom she seemed no longer to think about, found the continuance of the gentle voice beyond calculation short. Eager to be as little among them as possible, Emma was delighted with the alternative of sitting above with her father, and warmly entreated to be his constant companion each evening; and as Elizabeth loved company of any kind too well not to prefer being below at all risks; as she had rather talk of Croydon with Jane, with every interruption of Margaret's perverseness, than sit with only her father, who frequently could not endure talking at all, — the affair was so settled, as soon as she could be persuaded to believe it no sacrifice on her sister's part. To Emma the change was most acceptable and delightful. Her father, if ill, required little more than gentleness and silence, and being a man of sense and education, was, if able to converse, a welcome companion. In his chamber Emma was at peace from

the dreadful mortifications of unequal society and family discord; from the immediate endurance of hard-hearted prosperity, low-minded conceit, and wrong-headed folly, engrafted on an untoward disposition. She still suffered from them in the contemplation of their existence, in memory and in prospect, but for the moment she ceased to be tortured by their effects. She was at leisure; she could read and think, though her situation was hardly such as to make reflection very soothing. The evils arising from the loss of her uncle were neither trifling nor likely to lessen; and when thought had been freely indulged in contrasting the past and the present, the employment of mind and dissipation of unpleasant ideas, which only reading could produce, made her thankfully turn to a book.

The change in her home society and style of life, in consequence of the death of one friend and the imprudence of another, had indeed been striking. From being the first object of hope and solicitude to an uncle who had formed her mind with the care of a parent, and of tenderness to an aunt whose amiable temper had delighted to give her every indulgence; from being the life and spirit of a house where all had been comfort and elegance, and the expected heiress of an easy independence, she was become of importance to no one, — a burden on those whose affections she could not expect, an addition in a house already overstocked, surrounded by inferior minds, with little chance of domestic comfort, and as little hope of future support. It was well for her that she was naturally cheerful, for the change

had been such as might have plunged weak spirits in despondence.

She was very much pressed by Robert and Jane to return with them to Croydon, and had some difficulty in getting a refusal accepted, as they thought too highly of their own kindness and situation to suppose the offer could appear in less advantageous light to anybody else. Elizabeth gave them her interest, though evidently against her own, in privately urging Emma to go.

"You do not know what you refuse, Emma," said she, "nor what you have to bear at home. I would advise you by all means to accept the invitation ; there is always something lively going on at Croydon. You will be in company almost every day, and Robert and Jane will be very kind to you. As for me, I shall be no worse off without you than I have been used to be ; but poor Margaret's disagreeable ways are new to you, and they would vex you more than you think for, if you stay at home."

Emma was of course uninfluenced, except to greater esteem for Elizabeth, by such representations, and the visitors departed without her.

When the author's sister, Cassandra, showed the manuscript of this work to some of her nieces, she also told them something of the intended story; for with this dear sister — though, I believe, with no one else — Jane seems to have talked freely of any work that she might have in hand. Mr. Watson was soon to die; and Emma to become dependent

for a home on her narrow-minded sister-in-law and brother. She was to decline an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne, and much of the interest of the tale was to arise from Lady Osborne's love for Mr. Howard, and his counter affection for Emma, whom he was finally to marry.

A MEMOIR.

"He knew of no one but himself who was inclined to the work. This is no uncommon motive. A man sees something to be done, knows of no one who will do it but himself, and so is driven to the enterprise."

HELPS'S *Life of Columbus*, ch. i.

PREFACE.

THE MEMOIR of my aunt, JANE AUSTEN, has been received with more favor than I had ventured to expect. The notices taken of it in the periodical press, as well as letters addressed to me by many with whom I am not personally acquainted, show that an unabated interest is still taken in every particular that can be told about her. I am thus encouraged not only to offer a Second Edition of the Memoir, but also to enlarge it with some additional matter which I might have scrupled to intrude on the public if they had not thus seemed to call for it. In the present Edition, the narrative is somewhat enlarged, and a few more letters are added; with a short specimen of her childish stories. The cancelled chapter of "Persuasion" is given, in compliance with wishes both publicly and privately expressed. A fragment of a story entitled "The Watsons" is printed; and extracts are given from a novel which she had begun a few months before her death; but the chief addition is a short tale, never before published, called "Lady Susan." I regret that the little which I have

been able to add could not appear in my First Edition; as much of it was either unknown to me, or not at my command, when I first published; and I hope that I may claim some indulgent allowance for the difficulty of recovering little facts and feelings which had been merged half a century deep in oblivion.

A MEMOIR OF JANE AUSTEN.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS — BIRTH OF JANE AUSTEN — HER FAMILY CONNECTIONS — THEIR INFLUENCE ON HER WRITINGS.

MORE than half a century has passed away since I, the youngest of the mourners,[1] attended the funeral of my dear aunt Jane in Winchester Cathedral; and now, in my old age, I am asked whether my memory will serve to rescue from oblivion any events of her life or any traits of her character to satisfy the inquiries of a generation of readers who have been born since she died. Of events her life was singularly barren: few changes and no great crisis ever broke the smooth current of its course. Even her fame may be said to have been posthumous: it did not attain to any vigorous life till she had ceased to exist. Her talents did not introduce

[1] I went to represent my father, who was too unwell to attend himself, and thus I was the only one of my generation present.

her to the notice of other writers, or connect her with the literary world, or in any degree pierce through the obscurity of her domestic retirement. I have therefore scarcely any materials for a detailed life of my aunt; but I have a distinct recollection of her person and character; and perhaps many may take an interest in a delineation, if any such can be drawn, of that prolific mind whence sprung the Dashwoods and Bennets, the Bertrams and Woodhouses, the Thorpes and Musgroves, who have been admitted as familiar guests to the firesides of so many families, and are known there as individually and intimately as if they were living neighbors. Many may care to know whether the moral rectitude, the correct taste, and the warm affections with which she invested her ideal characters, were really existing in the native source whence those ideas flowed, and were actually exhibited by her in the various relations of life. I can indeed bear witness that there was scarcely a charm in her most delightful characters that was not a true reflection of her own sweet temper and loving heart. I was young when we lost her; but the impressions made on the young are deep, and though in the course of fifty years I have forgotten much, I have not forgotten that "Aunt Jane" was the delight of all her nephews and nieces. We did not think of her as being clever, still less as being famous; but we valued her as one always kind, sympathizing, and amusing. To all this I am a living witness, but whether I can sketch out such a faint outline of this excellence as shall be perceptible to others may be reasonably doubted.

Aided, however, by a few survivors[1] who knew her, I will not refuse to make the attempt. I am the more inclined to undertake the task from a conviction that, however little I may have to tell, no one else is left who could tell so much of her.

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775, at the Parsonage House of Steventon in Hampshire. Her father, the Rev. George Austen, was of a family long established in the neighborhood of Tenterden and Sevenoaks in Kent. I believe that early in the seventeenth century they were clothiers. Hasted, in his History of Kent, says: "The clothing business was exercised by persons who possessed most of the landed property in the Weald, insomuch that almost all the ancient families of these parts, now of large estates and genteel rank in life, and some of them ennobled by titles, are sprung from ancestors who have used this great staple manufacture, now almost unknown here." In his list of these families Hasted places the Austens, and he adds that these clothiers "were usually called the Gray Coats of Kent; and were a body so numerous and united that at county elections whoever had their vote and interest was

[1] My chief assistants have been my sisters, Mrs. B. Lefroy and Miss Austen, whose recollections of our aunt are, on some points, more vivid than my own. I have not only been indebted to their memory for facts, but have sometimes used their words. Indeed some passages towards the end of the work were entirely written by the latter.

I have also to thank some of my cousins, and especially the daughters of Admiral Charles Austen, for the use of letters and papers which had passed into their hands, without which this Memoir, scanty as it is, could not have been written.

almost certain of being elected." The family still retains a badge of this origin; for their livery is of that peculiar mixture of light blue and white, called Kentish gray, which forms the facings of the Kentish militia.

Mr. George Austen had lost both his parents before he was nine years old. He inherited no property from them; but was happy in having a kind uncle, Mr. Francis Austen, a successful lawyer at Tunbridge, the ancestor of the Austens of Kippington, who, though he had children of his own, yet made liberal provision for his orphan nephew. The boy received a good education at Tunbridge School, whence he obtained a scholarship, and subsequently a fellowship, at St. John's College, Oxford. In 1764 he came into possession of the two adjoining Rectories of Deane and Steventon in Hampshire; the former purchased for him by his generous uncle Francis, the latter given by his cousin, Mr. Knight. This was no very gross case of plurality, according to the ideas of that time; for the two villages were little more than a mile apart, and their united populations scarcely amounted to three hundred. In the same year he married Cassandra, youngest daughter of the Rev. Thomas Leigh, of the family of Leighs of Warwickshire, who, having been a fellow of All Souls, held the College living of Harpsden, near Henley-upon-Thames. Mr. Thomas Leigh was a younger brother of Dr. Theophilus Leigh, a personage well known at Oxford in his day, and his day was not a short one, for he lived to be ninety, and held the Mastership of Balliol College

for above half a century. He was a man more famous for his sayings than his doings, overflowing with puns and witticisms and sharp retorts; but his most serious joke was his practical one of living much longer than had been expected or intended. He was a fellow of Corpus, and the story is that the Balliol men, unable to agree in electing one of their own number to the Mastership, chose him, partly under the idea that he was in weak health and likely soon to cause another vacancy. It was afterwards said that his long incumbency had been a judgment on the Society for having elected an Out-College-Man [1] I imagine that the front of Balliol towards Broad Street which has recently been pulled down must have been built, or at least restored, while he was Master, for the Leigh arms were placed under the cornice at the corner nearest to Trinity gates. The beautiful building lately erected has destroyed this record, and thus "monuments themselves memorials need."

His fame for witty and agreeable conversation extended beyond the bounds of the University. Mrs. Thrale, in a letter to Dr. Johnson, writes thus: "Are you acquainted with Dr. Leigh,[2] the Master of Balliol College, and are you not delighted with his gayety of manners and youthful vivacity, now that he is eighty-six years of age?

[1] There seems to have been some doubt as to the validity of this election; for Hearne says that it was referred to the Visitor, who confirmed it. (Hearne's "Diaries," v. 2.)

[2] Mrs. Thrale writes Dr. Lee, but there can be no doubt of the identity of person.

I never heard a more perfect or excellent pun than his, when some one told him how, in a late dispute among the Privy Councillors, the Lord Chancellor struck the table with such violence that he split it. "No, no, no," replied the Master; "I can hardly persuade myself that he *split the table*, though I believe he *divided* the *Board*."

Some of his sayings of course survive in family tradition. He was once calling on a gentleman notorious for never opening a book, who took him into a room overlooking the Bath Road, which was then a great thoroughfare for travellers of every class, saying rather pompously, "This, Doctor, I call my study." The Doctor, glancing his eye round the room, in which no books were to be seen, replied, "And very well named too, sir, for you know Pope tells us, 'The proper *study* of mankind is *Man*.'" When my father went to Oxford, he was honored with an invitation to dine with this dignified cousin. Being a raw undergraduate, unaccustomed to the habits of the University, he was about to take off his gown, as if it were a great-coat, when the old man, then considerably turned eighty, said, with a grim smile, "Young man, you need not strip: we are not going to fight." This humor remained in him so strongly to the last that he might almost have supplied Pope with another instance of "the ruling passion strong in death;" for only three days before he expired, being told that an old acquaintance was lately married, having recovered from a long illness by eating eggs, and that the wits said that he had been egged on to matrimony, he im-

mediately trumped the joke, saying, "Then may the yoke sit easy on him." I do not know from what common ancestor the Master of Balliol and his great-niece, Jane Austen, with some others of the family, may have derived the keen sense of humor which they certainly possessed.

Mr. and Mrs. George Austen resided first at Deane, but removed in 1771 to Steventon, which was their residence for about thirty years. They commenced their married life with the charge of a little child, a son of the celebrated Warren Hastings, who had been committed to the care of Mr. Austen before his marriage, probably through the influence of his sister, Mrs. Hancock, whose husband at that time held some office under Hastings in India. Mr. Gleig, in his "Life of Hastings," says that his son George, the offspring of his first marriage, was sent to England in 1761 for his education, but that he had never been able to ascertain to whom this precious charge was intrusted, nor what became of him. I am able to state, from family tradition, that he died young, of what was then called putrid sore throat; and that Mrs. Austen had become so much attached to him that she always declared that his death had been as great a grief to her as if he had been a child of her own.

About this time, the grandfather of Mary Russell Mitford, Dr. Russell, was rector of the adjoining parish of Ashe; so that the parents of two popular female writers must have been intimately acquainted with each other.

As my subject carries me back about a hundred

years, it will afford occasions for observing many changes gradually effected in the manners and habits of society, which I may think it worth while to mention. They may be little things; but time gives a certain importance even to trifles, as it imparts a peculiar flavor to wine. The most ordinary articles of domestic life are looked on with some interest, if they are brought to light after being long buried; and we feel a natural curiosity to know what was done and said by our forefathers, even though it may be nothing wiser or better than what we are daily doing or saying ourselves. Some of this generation may be little aware how many conveniences, now considered to be necessaries and matters of course, were unknown to their grandfathers and grandmothers. The lane between Deane and Steventon has long been as smooth as the best turnpike road; but when the family removed from the one residence to the other in 1771, it was a mere cart track, so cut up by deep ruts as to be impassable for a light carriage. Mrs. Austen, who was not then in strong health, performed the short journey on a feather-bed, placed upon some soft articles of furniture in the wagon which held their household goods. In those days it was not unusual to set men to work with shovel and pickaxe to fill up ruts and holes in roads seldom used by carriages, on such special occasions as a funeral or a wedding. Ignorance and coarseness of language also were still lingering even upon higher levels of society than might have been expected to retain such mists. About this time, a neighboring squire, a

man of many acres, referred the following difficulty to Mr. Austen's decision: "You know all about these sort of things. Do tell us. Is Paris in France, or France in Paris? for my wife has been disputing with me about it." The same gentleman, narrating some conversation which he had heard between the rector and his wife, represented the latter as beginning her reply to her husband with a round oath; and when his daughter called him to task, reminding him that Mrs. Austen never swore, he replied, "Now, Betty, why do you pull me up for nothing? that 's neither here nor there; you know very well that 's only my way of telling the story." Attention has lately been called by a celebrated writer to the inferiority of the clergy to the laity of England two centuries ago. The charge no doubt is true, if the rural clergy are to be compared with that higher section of country gentlemen who went into Parliament, and mixed in London society, and took the lead in their several counties; but it might be found less true if they were to be compared, as in all fairness they ought to be, with that lower section with whom they usually associated. The smaller landed proprietors, who seldom went farther from home than their county town, from the squire with his thousand acres to the yeoman who cultivated his hereditary property of one or two hundred, then formed a numerous class, — each the aristocrat of his own parish; and there was probably a greater difference in manners and refinement between this class and that immediately above them than could now be found between any two persons who rank

as gentlemen. For in the progress of civilization, though all orders may make some progress, yet it is most perceptible in the lower. It is a process of "levelling up;" the rear rank "dressing up," as it were, close to the front rank. When Hamlet mentions, as something which he had "for three years taken note of," that "the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier," it was probably intended by Shakspeare as a satire on his own times; but it expressed a principle which is working at all times in which society makes any progress. I believe that a century ago the improvement in most country parishes began with the clergy; and that in those days a rector who chanced to be a gentleman and a scholar, found himself superior to his chief parishioners in information and manners, and became a sort of centre of refinement and politeness.

Mr. Austen was a remarkably good-looking man, both in his youth and his old age. During his year of office at Oxford he had been called "the handsome Proctor;" and at Bath, when more than seventy years old, he attracted observation by his fine features and abundance of snow-white hair. Being a good scholar he was able to prepare two of his sons for the University, and to direct the studies of his other children, whether sons or daughters, as well as to increase his income by taking pupils.

In Mrs. Austen also was to be found the germ of much of the ability which was concentrated in Jane, but of which others of her children had a share. She united strong common sense with a

lively imagination, and often expressed herself, both in writing and in conversation, with epigrammatic force and point. She lived, like many of her family, to an advanced age. During the last years of her life she endured continual pain, not only patiently, but with characteristic cheerfulness. She once said to me, "Ah, my dear, you find me just where you left me, — on the sofa. I sometimes think that God Almighty must have forgotten me; but I dare say he will come for me in his own good time." She died and was buried at Chawton, January, 1827, aged eighty-eight.

Her own family were so much, and the rest of the world so little, to Jane Austen, that some brief mention of her brothers and sister is necessary, in order to give any idea of the objects which principally occupied her thoughts and filled her heart, especially as some of them, from their characters or professions in life, may be supposed to have had more or less influence on her writings; though I feel some reluctance in bringing before public notice persons and circumstances essentially private.

Her eldest brother James, my own father, had, when a very young man, at St. John's College, Oxford, been the originator and chief supporter of a periodical paper called "The Loiterer," written somewhat on the plan of the "Spectator" and its successors, but nearly confined to subjects connected with the University. In after life he used to speak very slightingly of this early work, which he had the better right to do, as, whatever may have been the degree of their merits, the best

papers had certainly been written by himself. He was well read in English literature, had a correct taste, and wrote readily and happily, both in prose and verse. He was more than ten years older than Jane, and had, I believe, a large share in directing her reading and forming her taste.

Her second brother, Edward, had been a good deal separated from the rest of the family, as he was early adopted by his cousin, Mr. Knight, of Godmersham Park in Kent, and Chawton House in Hampshire; and finally came into possession both of the property and the name. But though a good deal separated in childhood, they were much together in after-life, and Jane gave a large share of her affections to him and his children. Mr. Knight was not only a very amiable man, kind and indulgent to all connected with him, but possessed also a spirit of fun and liveliness which made him especially delightful to all young people.

Her third brother, Henry, had great conversational powers, and inherited from his father an eager and sanguine disposition. He was a very entertaining companion, but had perhaps less steadiness of purpose, certainly less success in life, than his brothers. He became a clergyman when middle-aged; and an allusion to his sermons will be found in one of Jane's letters. At one time he resided in London, and was useful in transacting his sister's business with her publishers.

Her two youngest brothers, Francis and Charles, were sailors during that glorious period of the British navy which comprises the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, when it

was impossible for an officer to be almost always afloat, as these brothers were, without seeing service which, in these days, would be considered distinguished. Accordingly, they were continually engaged in actions of more or less importance, and sometimes gained promotion by their success. Both rose to the rank of Admiral, and carried out their flags to distant stations.

Francis lived to attain the very summit of his profession, — having died, in his ninety-third year, G. C. B. and Senior Admiral of the Fleet, in 1865. He possessed great firmness of character, with a strong sense of duty, whether due from himself to others, or from others to himself. He was consequently a strict disciplinarian; but, as he was a very religious man, it was remarked of him (for in those days, at least, it was remarkable) that he maintained this discipline without ever uttering an oath or permitting one in his presence. On one occasion, when ashore in a sea-side town, he was spoken of as "*the* officer who kneeled at church," — a custom which now happily would not be thought peculiar.

Charles was generally serving in frigates or sloops, — blockading harbors, driving the ships of the enemy ashore, boarding gun-boats, and frequently making small prizes. At one time he was absent from England on such services for seven years together. In later life he commanded the "Bellerophon" at the bombardment of St. Jean d'Acre in 1840. In 1850 he went out in the "Hastings," in command of the East India and China station; but on the breaking out of the Burmese war

he transferred his flag to a steam sloop, for the purpose of getting up the shallow waters of the Irrawaddy, on board of which he died of cholera, in 1852, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. His sweet temper and affectionate disposition, in which he resembled his sister Jane, had secured to him an unusual portion of attachment, not only from his own family, but from all the officers and common sailors who served under him. One who was with him at his death has left this record of him: "Our good Admiral won the hearts of all by his gentleness and kindness while he was struggling with disease and endeavoring to do his duty as Commander-in-chief of the British naval forces in these waters. His death was a great grief to the whole fleet. I know that I cried bitterly when I found he was dead." The Order in Council of the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, expresses "admiration of the stanch high spirit which, notwithstanding his age and previous sufferings, had led the Admiral to take his part in the trying service which closed his career."

These two brothers have been dwelt on longer than the others, because their honorable career accounts for Jane Austen's partiality for the Navy, as well as for the readiness and accuracy with which she wrote about it. She was always very careful not to meddle with matters which she did not thoroughly understand. She never touched upon politics, law, or medicine, — subjects which some novel writers have ventured on rather too boldly, and have treated, perhaps, with more brilliancy than accuracy. But with ships and sailors she

felt herself at home, or at least could always trust to a brotherly critic to keep her right. I believe that no flaw has ever been found in her seamanship, either in "Mansfield Park" or in "Persuasion."

But dearest of all to the heart of Jane was her sister Cassandra, about three years her senior. Their sisterly affection for each other could scarcely be exceeded. Perhaps it began on Jane's side with the feeling of deference natural to a loving child towards a kind elder sister. Something of this feeling always remained; and even in the maturity of her powers, and in the enjoyment of increasing success, she would still speak of Cassandra as of one wiser and better than herself. In childhood, when the elder was sent to the school of a Mrs. Latournelle, in the Forbury at Reading, the younger went with her, not because she was thought old enough to profit much by the instruction there imparted, but because she would have been miserable without her sister; her mother observing that, "if Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate." This attachment was never interrupted or weakened. They lived in the same home, and shared the same bedroom, till separated by death. They were not exactly alike. Cassandra's was the colder and calmer disposition; she was always prudent and well judging, but with less outward demonstration of feeling and less sunniness of temper than Jane possessed. It was remarked in her family that "Cassandra had the merit of having her temper always under command, but that

Jane had the happiness of a temper that never required to be commanded." When "Sense and Sensibility" came out, some persons, who knew the family slightly, surmised that the two elder Miss Dashwoods were intended by the author for her sister and herself; but this could not be the case. Cassandra's character might indeed represent the "sense" of Elinor, but Jane's had little in common with the "sensibility" of Marianne. The young woman who, before the age of twenty, could so clearly discern the failings of Marianne Dashwood, could hardly have been subject to them herself.

This was the small circle, continually enlarged, however, by the increasing families of four of her brothers, within which Jane Austen found her wholesome pleasures, duties, and interests, and beyond which she went very little into society during the last ten years of her life. There was so much that was agreeable and attractive in this family party that its members may be excused if they were inclined to live somewhat too exclusively within it. They might see in each other much to love and esteem, and something to admire. The family talk had abundance of spirit and vivacity, and was never troubled by disagreements even in little matters, for it was not their habit to dispute or argue with each other; above all, there was strong family affection and firm union, never to be broken but by death. It cannot be doubted that all this had its influence on the author in the construction of her stories, in which a family party usually supplies the narrow

stage, while the interest is made to revolve round a few actors.

It will be seen also that though her circle of society was small, yet she found in her neighborhood persons of good taste and cultivated minds. Her acquaintance, in fact, constituted the very class from which she took her imaginary characters, ranging from the member of Parliament, or large landed proprietor, to the young curate or younger midshipman of equally good family; and I think that the influence of these early associations may be traced in her writings, especially in two particulars: first, that she is entirely free from the vulgarity, which is so offensive in some novels, of dwelling on the outward appendages of wealth or rank, as if they were things to which the writer was unaccustomed; and, secondly, that she deals as little with very low as with very high stations in life. She does not go lower than the Miss Steeles, Mrs. Elton, and John Thorpe, a people of bad taste and underbred manners, such as are actually found sometimes mingling with better society. She has nothing resembling the Brangtons, or Mr. Dubster and his friend Tom Hicks, with whom Madame D'Arblay loved to season her stories, and to produce striking contrasts to her well-bred characters.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIPTION OF STEVENTON — LIFE AT STEVENTON — CHANGES OF HABITS AND CUSTOMS IN THE LAST CENTURY.

As the first twenty-five years, more than half of the brief life of Jane Austen, were spent in the parsonage of Steventon, some description of that place ought to be given. Steventon is a small rural village upon the chalk hills of north Hants, situated in a winding valley about seven miles from Basingstoke. The South-Western Railway crosses it by a short embankment, and, as it curves round, presents a good view of it on the left-hand to those who are travelling down the line, about three miles before entering the tunnel under Popham Beacon. It may be known to some sportsmen, as lying in one of the best portions of the Vine Hunt. It is certainly not a picturesque country, — it presents no grand or extensive views; but the features are small, rather plain. The surface continually swells and sinks, but the hills are not bold, nor the valleys deep; and though it is sufficiently well clothed with woods and hedgerows, yet the poverty of the soil in most places prevents the timber from attaining a large size. Still it has its beauties. The lanes wind along in a natural curve, continually fringed

with irregular borders of native turf, and lead to pleasant nooks and corners. One who knew and loved it well very happily expressed its quiet charms, when he wrote, —

> True taste is not fastidious, nor rejects,
> Because they may not come within the rule
> Of composition pure and picturesque,
> Unnumbered simple scenes which fill the leaves
> Of Nature's sketch-book."

Of this somewhat tame country, Steventon, from the fall of the ground, and the abundance of its timber, is certainly one of the prettiest spots; yet one cannot be surprised that, when Jane's mother, a little before her marriage, was shown the scenery of her future home, she should have thought it unattractive, compared with the broad river, the rich valley, and the noble hills which she had been accustomed to behold at her native home near Henley-upon-Thames.

The house itself stood in a shallow valley, surrounded by sloping meadows, well sprinkled with elm trees, at the end of a small village of cottages, each well provided with a garden, scattered about prettily on either side of the road. It was sufficiently commodious to hold pupils in addition to a growing family, and was in those times considered to be above the average of parsonages; but the rooms were finished with less elegance than would now be found in the most ordinary dwellings. No cornice marked the junction of wall and ceiling; while the beams which supported the upper floors projected into the rooms below in all their naked

simplicity, covered only by a coat of paint or white-wash: accordingly it has since been considered unworthy of being the rectory house of a family living, and about forty-five years ago it was pulled down for the purpose of erecting a new house in a far better situation on the opposite side of the valley.

North of the house, the road from Deane to Popham Lane ran at a sufficient distance from the front to allow a carriage-drive, through turf and trees. On the south side the ground rose gently, and was occupied by one of those old-fashioned gardens in which vegetables and flowers are combined, flanked and protected on the east by one of the thatched mud-walls common in that country, and overshadowed by fine elms. Along the upper or southern side of this garden ran a terrace of the finest turf, which must have been in the writer's thoughts when she described Catherine Morland's childish delight in "rolling down the green slope at the back of the house."

But the chief beauty of Steventon consisted in its hedgerows. A hedgerow, in that country, does not mean a thin, formal line of quickset, but an irregular border of copse-wood and timber, often wide enough to contain within it a winding footpath or a rough cart track. Under its shelter the earliest primroses, anemones, and wild hyacinths were to be found; sometimes, the first bird's-nest; and, now and then, the unwelcome adder. Two such hedgerows radiated, as it were, from the parsonage garden. One, a continuation of the turf terrace, proceeded westward, forming the southern boundary of the home meadows; and was formed into a rustic

shrubbery, with occasional seats, entitled "The Wood Walk." The other ran straight up the hill, under the name of "The Church Walk," because it led to the parish church, as well as to a fine old manor-house, of Henry VIII.'s time, occupied by a family named Digweed, who have for more than a century rented it, together with the chief farm in the parish. The church itself — I speak of it as it then was, before the improvements made by the present rector —

> "A little spireless fane,
> Just seen above the woody lane,"

might have appeared mean and uninteresting to an ordinary observer; but the adept in church architecture would have known that it must have stood there some seven centuries, and would have found beauty in the very narrow early English windows, as well as in the general proportions of its little chancel; while its solitary position, far from the hum of the village, and within sight of no habitation, except a glimpse of the gray manor-house through its circling screen of sycamores, has in it something solemn and appropriate to the last resting-place of the silent dead. Sweet violets, both purple and white, grow in abundance beneath its south wall. One may imagine for how many centuries the ancestors of these little flowers have occupied that undisturbed, sunny nook, and may think how few living families can boast of as ancient a tenure of their land. Large elms protrude their rough branches; old hawthorns shed their annual blossoms over the graves; and the hollow yew-tree must be at least coeval with the church.

But whatever may be the beauties or defects of the surrounding scenery, this was the residence of Jane Austen for twenty-five years. This was the cradle of her genius. These were the first objects which inspired her young heart with a sense of the beauties of nature. In strolls along those wood-walks thick-coming fancies rose in her mind, and gradually assumed the forms in which they came forth to the world. In that simple church she brought them all into subjection to the piety which ruled her in life, and supported her in death.

The home at Steventon must have been, for many years, a pleasant and prosperous one. The family was unbroken by death, and seldom visited by sorrow. Their situation had some peculiar advantages beyond those of ordinary rectories. Steventon was a family living. Mr. Knight, the patron, was also proprietor of nearly the whole parish. He never resided there, and consequently the rector and his children came to be regarded in the neighborhood as a kind of representatives of the family. They shared with the principal tenant the command of an excellent manor, and enjoyed, in this reflected way, some of the consideration usually awarded to landed proprietors. They were not rich, but, aided by Mr. Austen's powers of teaching, they had enough to afford a good education to their sons and daughters, to mix in the best society of the neighborhood, and to exercise a liberal hospitality to their own relations and friends. A carriage and a pair of horses were kept. This might imply a higher style of living in our days than it did in theirs. There were then no assessed taxes.

The carriage, once bought, entailed little further expense; and the horses probably, like Mr. Bennet's, were often employed on farm work. Moreover, it should be remembered that a pair of horses in those days were almost necessary, if ladies were to move about at all; for neither the condition of the roads nor the style of carriage-building admitted of any comfortable vehicle being drawn by a single horse. When one looks at the few specimens still remaining of coach-building in the last century, it strikes one that the chief object of the builders must have been to combine the greatest possible weight with the least possible amount of accommodation.

The family lived in close intimacy with two cousins, Edward and Jane Cooper, the children of Mrs. Austen's eldest sister, and Dr. Cooper, the vicar of Sonning, near Reading. The Coopers lived for some years at Bath, which seems to have been much frequented in those days by clergymen retiring from work. I believe that Cassandra and Jane sometimes visited them there, and that Jane thus acquired the intimate knowledge of the topography and customs of Bath, which enabled her to write "Northanger Abbey" long before she resided there herself. After the death of their own parents, the two young Coopers paid long visits at Steventon. Edward Cooper did not live undistinguished. When an undergraduate at Oxford, he gained the prize for Latin hexameters on "Hortus Anglicus" in 1791; and in later life he was known by a work on prophecy, called "The Crisis," and other religious publications, especially for several volumes of Sermons, much

preached in many pulpits in my youth. Jane Cooper was married from her uncle's house at Steventon, to Captain, afterwards Sir Thomas, Williams, under whom Charles Austen served in several ships. She was a dear friend of her namesake, but was fated to become a cause of great sorrow to her, for a few years after the marriage she was suddenly killed by an accident to her carriage.

There was another cousin closely associated with them at Steventon, who must have introduced greater variety into the family circle. This was the daughter of Mr. Austen's only sister, Mrs. Hancock. This cousin had been educated in Paris, and married to a Count de Feuillade, of whom I know little more than that he perished by the guillotine during the French Revolution. Perhaps his chief offence was his rank; but it was said that the charge of "incivism," under which he suffered, rested on the fact of his having laid down some arable land into pasture, — a sure sign of his intention to embarrass the Republican Government by producing a famine! His wife escaped through dangers and difficulties to England, was received for some time into her uncle's family, and finally married her cousin, Henry Austen. During the short peace of Amiens, she and her second husband went to France, in the hope of recovering some of the Count's property, and there narrowly escaped being included amongst the *détenus*. Orders had been given by Buonaparte's Government to detain all English travellers; but at the post-houses Mrs. Henry Austen gave the neces-

sary orders herself, and her French was so perfect that she passed everywhere for a native, and her husband escaped under this protection.

She was a clever woman, and highly accomplished, after the French rather than the English mode; and in those days, when intercourse with the Continent was long interrupted by war, such an element in the society of a country parsonage must have been a rare acquisition. The sisters may have been more indebted to this cousin than to Mrs. La Tournelle's teaching for the considerable knowledge of French which they possessed. She also took the principal parts in the private theatricals in which the family several times indulged, — having their summer theatre in the barn, and their winter one within the narrow limits of the dining-room, where the number of the audience must have been very limited. On these occasions, the prologues and epilogues were written by Jane's eldest brother, and some of them are very vigorous and amusing. Jane was only twelve years old at the time of the earliest of these representations, and not more than fifteen when the last took place. She was, however, an early observer, and it may be reasonably supposed that some of the incidents and feelings which are so vividly painted in the Mansfield Park theatricals are due to her recollections of these entertainments.

Some time before they left Steventon, one great affliction came upon the family. Cassandra was engaged to be married to a young clergyman. He had not sufficient private fortune to permit an immediate union; but the engagement was not

likely to be a hopeless or a protracted one, for he had a prospect of early preferment from a nobleman with whom he was connected both by birth and by personal friendship. He accompanied this friend to the West Indies, as chaplain to his regiment, and there died of yellow-fever, — to the great concern of his friend and patron, who afterwards declared that, if he had known of the engagement, he would not have permitted him to go out to such a climate. This little domestic tragedy caused great and lasting grief to the principal sufferer, and could not but cast a gloom over the whole party. The sympathy of Jane was probably, from her age and her peculiar attachment to her sister, the deepest of all.

Of Jane herself I know of no such definite tale of love to relate. Her reviewer in the "Quarterly," of January, 1821, observes, concerning the attachment of Fanny Price to Edmund Bertram: "The silence in which this passion is cherished, the slender hopes and enjoyments by which it is fed, the restlessness and jealousy with which it fills a mind naturally active, contented, and unsuspicious, the manner in which it tinges every event, and every reflection, are painted with a vividness and a detail of which we can scarcely conceive any one but a female, and we should almost add, a female writing from recollection, capable." This conjecture, however probable, was wide of the mark. The picture was drawn from the intuitive perceptions of genius, not from personal experience. In no circumstance of her life was there any similarity between herself and her

heroine in "Mansfield Park." She did not indeed pass through life without being the object of warm affection. In her youth she had declined the addresses of a gentleman who had the recommendations of good character and connections and position in life, — of everything, in fact, except the subtle power of touching her heart. There is, however, one passage of romance in her history with which I am imperfectly acquainted, and to which I am unable to assign name or date or place, though I have it on sufficient authority. Many years after her death, some circumstances induced her sister Cassandra to break through her habitual reticence and to speak of it. She said that, while staying at some seaside place, they became acquainted with a gentleman whose charm of person, mind, and manners was such that Cassandra thought him worthy to possess and likely to win her sister's love. When they parted, he expressed his intention of soon seeing them again; and Cassandra felt no doubt as to his motives. But they never again met. Within a short time they heard of his sudden death. I believe that, if Jane ever loved, it was this unnamed gentleman; but the acquaintance had been short, and I am unable to say whether her feelings were of such a nature as to affect her happiness.

Any description that I might attempt of the family life at Steventon, which closed soon after I was born, could be little better than a fancy-piece. There is no doubt that if we look into the households of the clergy and the small gentry of that period, we should see some things which would

seem strange to us, and should miss many more to which we are accustomed. Every hundred years, and especially a century like the last, — marked by an extraordinary advance in wealth, luxury, and refinement of taste, as well as in the mechanical arts which embellish our houses, — must produce a great change in their aspect. These changes are always at work; they are going on now, but so silently that we take no note of them. Men soon forget the small objects which they leave behind them as they drift down the stream of life. As Pope says —

> "Nor does life's stream for observation stay;
> It hurries all too fast to mark their way."

Important inventions, such as the applications of steam, gas, and electricity, may find their places in history; but not so the alterations, great as they may be, which have taken place in the appearance of our dining and drawing rooms. Who can now record the degrees by which the custom prevalent in my youth of asking each other to take wine together at dinner became obsolete? Who will be able to fix, twenty years hence, the date when our dinners began to be carved and handed round by servants, instead of smoking before our eyes and noses on the table? To record such little matters would indeed be "to chronicle small beer." But, in a slight memoir like this, I may be allowed to note some of those changes in social habits which give a color to history, but which the historian has the greatest difficulty in recovering.

At that time the dinner-table presented a far

less splendid appearance than it does now. It was appropriated to solid food, rather than to flowers, fruits, and decorations. Nor was there much glitter of plate upon it; for the early dinner hour rendered candlesticks unnecessary, and silver folks had not come into general use; while the broad rounded end of the knives indicated the substitute generally used instead of them.[1]

The dinners too were more homely, though not less plentiful and savory; and the bill of fare in one house would not be so like that in another as it is now, for family receipts were held in high estimation. A grandmother of culinary talent could bequeath to her descendant fame for some particular dish, and might influence the family dinner for many generations.

> "Dos est magna parentium
> Virtus."

One house would pride itself on its ham, another on its game-pie, and a third on its superior

[1] The celebrated Beau Brummel, who was so intimate with George IV. as to be able to quarrel with him, was born in 1771. It is reported that when he was questioned about his parents, he replied that it was long since he had heard of them, but that he imagined the worthy couple must have cut their own throats by that time, because when he last saw them they were eating peas with their knives. Yet Brummel's father had probably lived in good society, and was certainly able to put his son into a fashionable regiment, and to leave him 30,000*l.*[2] Raikes believes that he had been Secretary to Lord North. Thackeray's idea that he had been a footman cannot stand against the authority of Raikes, who was intimate with the son.

[2] Raikes's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 207.

furmity, or tansey-pudding. Beer and home-made wines, especially mead, were more largely consumed. Vegetables were less plentiful and less various. Potatoes were used, but not so abundantly as now; and there was an idea they were to be eaten only with roast meat. They were novelties to a tenant's wife who was entertained at Steventon Parsonage, certainly less than a hundred years ago; and when Mrs. Austen advised her to plant them in her own garden, she replied, "No, no; they are very well for you gentry, but they must be terribly costly to rear."

But a still greater difference would be found in the furniture of the rooms, which would appear to us lamentably scanty. There was a general deficiency of carpeting in sitting-rooms, bed-rooms, and passages. A pianoforte, or rather a spinnet or harpsichord, was by no means a necessary appendage. It was to be found only where there was a decided taste for music (not so common then as now), or in such great houses as would probably contain a billiard-table. There would often be but one sofa in the house, and that a stiff, angular, uncomfortable article. There were no deep easy-chairs, nor other appliances for lounging; for to lie down, or even to lean back, was a luxury permitted only to old persons or invalids. It was said of a nobleman, a personal friend of George III. and a model gentleman of his day, that he would have made the tour of Europe without ever touching the back of his travelling carriage. But perhaps we should be most struck with the total absence of those elegant little articles which

now embellish and encumber our drawing-room tables. We should miss the sliding bookcases and picture-stands, the letterweighing machines and envelope cases, the periodicals and illustrated newpapers, — above all, the countless swarm of photograph books which now threaten to swallow up all space. A small writing-desk, with a smaller work-box, or netting-case, was all that each young lady contributed to occupy the table; for the large family work-basket, though often produced in the parlor, lived in the closet.

There must have been more dancing throughout the country in those days than there is now; and it seems to have sprung up more spontaneously, as if it were a natural production, with less fastidiousness as to the quality of music, lights, and floor. Many country towns had a monthly ball throughout the winter, in some of which the same apartment served for dancing and tea room. Dinner parties more frequently ended with an extempore dance on the carpet, to the music of a harpsichord in the house, or a fiddle from the village. This was always supposed to be for the entertainment of the young people; but many who had little pretension to youth were very ready to join in it. There can be no doubt that Jane herself enjoyed dancing, for she attributes this taste to her favorite heroines; in most of her works, a ball or a private dance is mentioned, and made of importance.

Many things connected with the ball-rooms of those days have now passed into oblivion. The barbarous law which confined the lady to one

partner throughout the evening must indeed have been abolished before Jane went to balls. It must be observed, however, that this custom was in one respect advantageous to the gentleman, inasmuch as it rendered his duties more practicable. He was bound to call upon his partner the next morning, and it must have been convenient to have only one lady for whom he was obliged

> "To gallop all the country over,
> The last night's partner to behold,
> And humbly hope she caught no cold."

But the stately minuet still reigned supreme; and every regular ball commenced with it. It was a slow and solemn movement, — expressive of grace and dignity, rather than of merriment. It abounded in formal bows and courtesies, with measured paces, forwards, backwards, and sideways, and many complicated gyrations. It was executed by one lady and gentleman, amidst the admiration, or the criticism, of surrounding spectators. In its earlier and most palmy days, as when Sir Charles and Lady Grandison delighted the company by dancing it at their own wedding, the gentleman wore a dress sword, and the lady was armed with a fan of nearly equal dimensions. Addison observes that "women are armed with fans, as men with swords, and sometimes do more execution with them." The graceful carriage of each weapon was considered a test of high breeding. The clownish man was in danger of being tripped up by his sword getting between his legs; the fan held clumsily looked more of a burden than an orna-

ment; while in the hands of an adept it could be made to speak a language of its own.[1] It was not every one who felt qualified to make this public exhibition, and I have been told that those ladies who intended to dance minuets used to distinguish themselves from others by wearing a particular kind of lappet on their head-dress. I have heard also of another curious proof of the respect in which this dance was held. Gloves immaculately clean were considered requisite for its due performance, while gloves a little soiled were thought good enough for a country dance; and accordingly some prudent ladies provided themselves with two pairs for their several purposes. The minuet expired with the last century; but long after it had ceased to be danced publicly it was taught to boys and girls, in order to give them a graceful carriage.

Hornpipes, cotillons, and reels were occasionally danced; but the chief occupation of the evening was the interminable country dance, in which all could join. This dance presented a great show of enjoyment, but it was not without its peculiar troubles. The ladies and gentlemen were ranged apart from each other, in opposite rows, so that the facilities for flirtation, or interesting intercourse, were not so great as might have been desired by

[1] See "Spectator," No. 102, on the Fan Exercise. Old gentlemen who had survived the fashion of wearing swords were known to regret the disuse of that custom, because it put an end to one way of distinguishing those who had, from those who had not, been used to good society. To wear the sword easily was an art which, like swimming and skating, required to be learned in youth. Children could practise it early with their toy swords adapted to their size.

both parties. Much heart-burning and discontent sometimes arose as to who should stand above whom, and especially as to who was entitled to the high privilege of calling and leading off the first dance; and no little indignation was felt at the lower end of the room when any of the leading couples retired prematurely from their duties, and did not condescend to dance up and down the whole set. We may rejoice that these causes of irritation no longer exist; and that if such feelings as jealousy, rivalry, and discontent ever touch celestial bosoms in the modern ball-room they must arise from different and more recondite sources.

I am tempted to add a little about the difference of personal habits. It may be asserted as a general truth, that less was left to the charge and discretion of servants, and more was done, or superintended, by the masters and mistresses. With regard to the mistresses, it is, I believe, generally understood, that at the time to which I refer, a hundred years ago, they took a personal part in the higher branches of cookery, as well as in the concoction of home-made wines and distilling of herbs for domestic medicines, which are nearly allied to the same art. Ladies did not disdain to spin the thread of which the household linen was woven. Some ladies liked to wash with their own hands their choice china after breakfast or tea. In one of my earliest child's books, a little girl, the daughter of a gentleman, is taught by her mother to make her own bed before leaving her chamber. It was not so much that they had not servants to do all these things for them, as that they took an

interest in such occupations. And it must be borne in mind how many sources of interest enjoyed by this generation were then closed, or very scantily opened, to ladies. A very small minority of them cared much for literature or science. Music was not a very common, and drawing was a still rarer, accomplishment; needlework, in some form or other, was their chief sedentary employment.

But I doubt whether the rising generation are equally aware how much gentlemen also did for themselves in those times, and whether some things that I can mention will not be a surprise to them. Two homely proverbs were held in higher estimation in my early days than they are now: "The master's eye makes the horse fat;" and, "If you would be well served, serve yourself." Some gentlemen took pleasure in being their own gardeners, performing all the scientific, and some of the manual, work themselves. Well-dressed young men of my acquaintance, who had their coat from a London tailor, would always brush their evening suit themselves, rather than intrust it to the carelessness of a rough servant, and to the risks of dirt and grease in the kitchen; for in those days servants' halls were not common in the houses of the clergy and the smaller country gentry. It was quite natural that Catherine Morland should have contrasted the magnificence of the offices at Northanger Abbey with the few shapeless pantries in her father's parsonage. A young man who expected to have his things packed or unpacked for him by a servant, when he travelled, would have been

thought exceptionally fine, or exceptionally lazy. When my uncle undertook to teach me to shoot, his first lesson was how to clean my own gun. It was thought meritorious on the evening of a hunting day, to turn out after dinner, lantern in hand, and visit the stable, to ascertain that the horse had been well cared for. This was of the more importance, because, previous to the introduction of clipping, about the year 1820, it was a difficult and tedious work to make a long-coated hunter dry and comfortable, and was often very imperfectly done. Of course, such things were not practised by those who had gamekeepers, and stud-grooms, and plenty of well-trained servants; but they were practised by many who were unequivocally gentlemen, and whose grandsons, occupying the same position in life, may perhaps be astonished at being told that "*such things were.*"

I have drawn pictures for which my own experience, or what I heard from others in my youth, have supplied the materials. Of course, they cannot be universally applicable. Such details varied in various circles, and were changed very gradually; nor can I pretend to tell how much of what I have said is descriptive of the family life at Steventon in Jane Austen's youth. I am sure that the ladies there had nothing to do with the mysteries of the stew-pot or the preserving-pan; but it is probable that their way of life differed a little from ours, and would have appeared to us more homely. It may be that useful articles, which would not now be produced in drawing-rooms, were hemmed, and marked, and darned in the old-fashioned parlor.

But all this concerned only the outer life; there was as much cultivation and refinement of mind as now, with probably more studied courtesy and ceremony of manner to visitors; whilst certainly in that family literary pursuits were not neglected.

I remember to have heard of only two little things different from modern customs. One was that on hunting mornings the young men usually took their hasty breakfast in the kitchen. The early hour at which hounds then met may account for this; and probably the custom began, if it did not end, when they were boys; for they hunted at an early age, in a scrambling sort of way, upon any pony or donkey that they could procure, or, in default of such luxuries, on foot. I have been told that Sir Francis Austen, when seven years old, bought on his own account, it must be supposed with his father's permission, a pony for a guinea and a half; and after riding him with great success for two seasons, sold him for a guinea more. One may wonder how the child could have so much money, and how the animal could have been obtained for so little. The same authority informs me that his first cloth suit was made from a scarlet habit, which, according to the fashion of the times, had been his mother's usual morning dress. If all this is true, the future Admiral of the British Fleet must have cut a conspicuous figure in the hunting-field. The other peculiarity was that, when the roads were dirty, the sisters took long walks in pattens. This defence against wet and dirt is now seldom seen. The few that remain are banished from good society, and employed only in

menial work; but a hundred and fifty years ago they were celebrated in poetry, and considered so clever a contrivance that Gay, in his "Trivia," ascribes the invention to a god stimulated by his passion for a mortal damsel, and derives the name "Patten" from "Patty."

> "The patten now supports each frugal dame,
> Which from the blue-eyed Patty takes the name."

But mortal damsels have long ago discarded the clumsy implement. First it dropped its iron ring and became a clog; afterwards it was fined down into the pliant galoshe, — lighter to wear and more effectual to protect, — a no less manifest instance of gradual improvement than Cowper indicates when he traces through eighty lines of poetry his "accomplished sofa" back to the original three-legged stool.

As an illustration of the purposes which a patten was intended to serve, I add the following epigram, written by Jane Austen's uncle, Mr. Leigh Perrot, on reading in a newspaper the marriage of Captain Foote to Miss Patten: —

> "Through the rough paths of life, with a patten your guard,
> May you safely and pleasantly jog;
> May the knot never slip, nor the ring press too hard,
> Nor the *Foot* find the *Patten* a clog."

At the time when Jane Austen lived at Steventon, a work was carried on in the neighboring cottages which ought to be recorded, because it has long ceased to exist.

Up to the beginning of the present century, poor

women found profitable employment in spinning flax or wool. This was a better occupation for them than straw-plaiting, inasmuch as it was carried on at the family hearth, and did not admit of gadding and gossiping about the village. The implement used was a long, narrow machine of wood, raised on legs, furnished at one end with a large wheel, and at the other with a spindle, on which the flax or wool was loosely wrapped, connected together by a loop of string. One hand turned the wheel, while the other formed the thread. The outstretched arms, the advanced foot, the sway of the whole figure backwards and forwards, produced picturesque attitudes, and displayed whatever of grace or beauty the work-woman might possess.[1] Some ladies were fond of spinning; but they worked in a quieter manner, sitting at a neat little machine of varnished wood, like Tunbridge ware, generally turned by the foot, with a basin of water at hand to supply the moisture required for forming the thread, which the cottager took by a more direct and natural process from her own mouth. I remember two such elegant little wheels in our own family.

It may be observed that this hand-spinning is the most primitive of female accomplishments, and can be traced back to the earliest times. Ballad poetry and fairy-tales are full of allusions to it. The term "spinster" still testifies to its having been the ordinary employment of the English young woman. It was the labor assigned to

[1] Mrs. Gaskell, in her tale of "Sylvia's Lovers," declares that this hand-spinning rivalled harp-playing in its gracefulness.

the ejected nuns by the rough earl who said, "Go spin, ye jades, go spin." It was the employment at which Roman matrons and Grecian princesses presided amongst their handmaids. Heathen mythology celebrated it in three Fates spinning and measuring out the thread of human life. Holy Scripture honors it in those "wise-hearted women" who "did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun" for the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness; and an old English proverb carries it still farther back to the time "when Adam delved and Eve span." But, at last, this time-honored domestic manufacture is quite extinct amongst us, — crushed by the power of steam, overborne by a countless host of spinning-jennies, and I can only just remember some of its last struggles for existence in the Steventon cottages.

CHAPTER III.

Early Compositions — Friends at Ashe — A very old Letter — Lines on the Death of Mrs. Lefroy — Observations on Jane Austen's Letter-writing — Letters.

I know little of Jane Austen's childhood. Her mother followed a custom, not unusual in those days, though it seems strange to us, of putting out her babies to be nursed in a cottage in the village. The infant was daily visited by one or both of its parents, and frequently brought to them at the parsonage; but the cottage was its home, and must have remained so till it was old enough to run about and talk; for I know that one of them, in after life, used to speak of his foster-mother as "Movie," the name by which he had called her in his infancy. It may be that the contrast between the parsonage house and the best class of cottages was not quite so extreme then as it would be now, — that the one was somewhat less luxurious, and the other less squalid. It would certainly seem from the results that it was a wholesome and invigorating system; for the children were all strong and healthy. Jane was probably treated like the rest in this respect. In childhood every available opportunity of instruction was made use of. According to the ideas of the time, she was

well educated, though not highly accomplished, and she certainly enjoyed that important element of mental training, associating at home with persons of cultivated intellect. It cannot be doubted that her early years were bright and happy, living as she did with indulgent parents, in a cheerful home, not without agreeable variety of society. To these sources of enjoyment must be added the first stirrings of talent within her, and the absorbing interest of original composition. It is impossible to say at how an early age she began to write. There are copy-books extant containing tales, some of which must have been composed while she was a young girl, as they had amounted to a considerable number by the time she was sixteen. Her earliest stories are of a slight and flimsy texture, and are generally intended to be nonsensical; but the nonsense has much spirit in it. They are usually preceded by a dedication of mock solemnity to some one of her family. It would seem that the grandiloquent dedications prevalent in those days had not escaped her youthful penetration. Perhaps the most characteristic feature in these early productions is that, however puerile the matter, they are always composed in pure simple English, quite free from the over-ornamented style which might be expected from so young a writer. One of her juvenile effusions is given as a specimen of the kind of transitory amusement which Jane was continually supplying to the family party.

THE MYSTERY.

AN UNFINISHED COMEDY.

DEDICATION.

To the Rev. George Austen.

Sir, — I humbly solicit your patronage to the following Comedy, which, though an unfinished one, is, I flatter myself, as complete a *Mystery* as any of its kind.

I am, Sir, your most humble Servant,

The Author.

THE MYSTERY; A COMEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men.	*Women.*
Col Elliott.	Fanny Elliott.
Old Humbug.	Mrs. Humbug,
Young Humbug.	*and*
Sir Edward Spangle,	Daphne.
and	
Corydon.	

ACT I.

Scene I. — *A Garden.*

Enter Corydon.

Corydon. But hush: I am interrupted. [*Exit* Corydon.

Enter OLD HUMBUG *and his* SON, *talking.*

Old Hum. It is for that reason that I wish you to follow my advice. Are you convinced of its propriety?

Young Hum. I am, sir, and will certainly act in the manner you have pointed out to me.

Old Hum. Then let us return to the house. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *A parlor in* HUMBUG'S *house.* Mrs. HUMBUG *and* FANNY *discovered at work.*

Mrs. Hum. You understand me, my love?

Fanny. Perfectly, ma'am; pray continue your narration.

Mrs. Hum. Alas! it is nearly concluded; for I have nothing more to say on the subject.

Fanny. Ah, here is Daphne.

Enter DAPHNE.

Daphne. My dear Mrs. Humbug, how d' ye do? Oh, Fanny! it is all over.

Fanny. Is it indeed?

Mrs. Hum. I'm very sorry to hear it.

Fanny. Then 't was to no purpose that I —

Daphne. None upon earth.

Mrs. Hum. And what is to become of —?

Daphne. Oh! 't is all settled. [*Whispers* Mrs. HUMBUG.]

Fanny. And how is it determined?

Daphne. I'll tell you. [*Whispers* FANNY.]

Mrs. Hum. And is he to —?

Daphne. I'll tell you all I know of the matter. [*Whispers* Mrs. HUMBUG *and* FANNY.]

Fanny. Well, now I know everything about it, I'll go away.

Mrs. Hum. }
Daphne. } And so will I. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *The curtain rises, and discovers* Sir EDWARD SPANGLE *reclined in an elegant attitude on a sofa, fast asleep.*

Enter Col. ELLIOTT.

Col. E. My daughter is not here, I see. There lies Sir Edward. Shall I tell him the secret? No, he 'll certainly blab it. But he 's asleep, and won't hear me; — so I 'll e'en venture. [*Goes up to* Sir EDWARD, *whispers him, and exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

FINIS.

Her own mature opinion of the desirableness of such an early habit of composition is given in the following words of a niece: —

"As I grew older, my aunt would talk to me more seriously of my reading and my amusements. I had taken early to writing verses and stories, and I am sorry to think how I troubled her with reading them. She was very kind about it, and always had some praise to bestow; but at last she warned me against spending too much time upon them. She said — how well I recollect it! — that she knew writing stories was a great amusement, and she thought a harmless one, though many people, she was aware, thought otherwise; but that at my age it would be bad for me to be much taken up with my own compositions. Later still — it was after she had gone to Winchester — she sent me a message to this effect, that if I would take her advice, I should cease writing till I was sixteen; that she had herself often wished she had read more and written less in the corresponding

years of her own life" As this niece was only twelve years old at the time of her aunt's death, these words seem to imply that the juvenile tales to which I have referred had, some of them at least, been written in her childhood.

But between these childish effusions and the composition of her living works there intervened another stage of her progress, during which she produced some stories, not without merit, but which she never considered worthy of publication. During this preparatory period her mind seems to have been working in a very different direction from that into which it ultimately settled. Instead of presenting faithful copies of nature, these tales were generally burlesques, ridiculing the improbable events and exaggerated sentiments which she had met with in sundry silly romances. Something of this fancy is to be found in "Northanger Abbey;" but she soon left it far behind in her subsequent course. It would seem as if she were first taking note of all the faults to be avoided, and curiously considering how she ought *not* to write before she attempted to put forth her strength in the right direction. The family have, rightly, I think, declined to let these early works be published. Mr. Shortreed observed very pithily of Walter Scott's early rambles on the borders, "He was makin' himsell a' the time; but he didna ken, may be, what he was about till years had passed. At first he thought of little, I dare say, but the queerness and the fun." And so, in a humbler way, Jane Austen was "makin' hersell," little thinking of future fame, but caring only for "the

queerness and the fun;" and it would be as unfair to expose this preliminary process to the world as it would be to display all that goes on behind the curtain of the theatre before it is drawn up.

It was, however, at Steventon that the real foundations of her fame were laid. There some of her most successful writing was composed, at such an early age as to make it surprising that so young a woman could have acquired the insight into character and the nice observation of manners which they display. "Pride and Prejudice," which some consider the most brilliant of her novels, was the first finished, if not the first begun. She began it in October, 1796, before she was twenty-one years old, and completed it in about ten months, in August, 1797. The title then intended for it was "First Impressions." "Sense and Sensibility" was begun, in its present form, immediately after the completion of the former, in November, 1797; but something similar in story and character had been written earlier under the title of "Elinor and Marianne;" and if, as is probable, a good deal of this earlier production was retained, it must form the earliest specimen of her writing that has been given to the world. "Northanger Abbey," though not prepared for the press till 1803, was certainly first composed in 1798.

Amongst the most valuable neighbors of the Austens were Mr. and Mrs. Lefroy and their family. He was rector of the adjoining parish of Ashe; she was sister to Sir Egerton Brydges, to whom we are indebted for the earliest notice of Jane Austen that exists. In his autobiography,

speaking of his visits at Ashe, he writes thus: "The nearest neighbors of the Lefroys were the Austens of Steventon. I remember Jane Austen, the novelist, as a little child. She was very intimate with Mrs. Lefroy, and much encouraged by her. Her mother was a Miss Leigh, whose paternal grandmother was sister to the first Duke of Chandos. Mr. Austen was of a Kentish family, of which several branches have been settled in the Weald of Kent, and some are still remaining there. When I knew Jane Austen, I never suspected that she was an authoress; but my eyes told me that she was fair and handsome, slight and elegant, but with cheeks a little too full." One may wish that Sir Egerton had dwelt rather longer on the subject of these memoirs, instead of being drawn away by his extreme love for genealogies to her great-grandmother and ancestors. That great-grandmother, however, lives in the family records as Mary Brydges, a daughter of Lord Chandos, married in Westminster Abbey to Theophilus Leigh of Addlestrop in 1698. When a girl she had received a curious letter of advice and reproof, written by her mother from Constantinople. Mary, or "Poll," was remaining in England with her grandmother, Lady Bernard, who seems to have been wealthy and inclined to be too indulgent to her granddaughter. This letter is given. Any such authentic document, two hundred years old, dealing with domestic details, must possess some interest. This is remarkable, not only as a specimen of the homely language in which ladies of rank then expressed themselves,

but from the sound sense which it contains. Forms of expression vary; but good sense and right principles are the same in the nineteenth that they were in the seventeenth century.

My DEARES POLL, — Y^r^ letters by Cousin Robbert Serle arrived here not before the 27^th^ of Aprill, yett were they hartily wellcome to us, bringing y^e^ joyful news which a great while we had longed for of my most dear Mother & all other relations & friends good health which I beseech God continue to you all, & as I observe in y^rs^ to y^r^ Sister Betty y^e^ extraordinary kindness of (as I may truly say) the best Moth^r^ & G^nd^ Moth^r^ in the world in pinching herself to make you fine, so I cannot but admire her great good Housewifry in affording you so very plentifull an allowance, & yett to increase her Stock at the rate I find she hath done; & think I can never sufficiently mind you how very much it is y^r^ duty on all occasions to pay her y^r^ gratitude in all humble submission & obedience to all her commands soe long as you live. I must tell you 't is to her bounty & care in y^e^ greatest measure you are like to owe y^r^ well living in this world, & as you cannot be very sensible you are an extraordinary charge to her so it behoves you to take particular heed th^t^ in y^e^ whole course of y^r^ life, you render her a proportionable comfort, especially since 't is y^e^ best way you can ever hope to make her such amends as God requires of y^r^ hands. But Poll! it grieves me a little & y^t^ I am forced to take notice of & reprove you for some vaine expressions in y^r^ lett^rs^ to y^r^ Sister

— you say concerning y^r allowance "you aime to bring y^r bread & cheese even" in this I do not discommend you, for a foule shame indeed it would be should you out run the Constable having soe liberall a provision made you for y^r maintenance — but y^e reason you give for y^r resolution I cannot at all approve for you say "to spend more you can't" thats because you have it not to spend, otherwise it seems you would. So y^t 't is y^r Grand-$moth^{rs}$ discretion & not yours th^t keeps you from extravagancy, which plainly appears in y^e close of y^r sentence, saying y^t you think it simple covetousness to save out of y^{rs} but 't is my opinion if you lay all on y^r back 't is ten tymes a greater sin & shame th^n to save some what out of soe large an allowance in y^r purse to help you at a dead lift. Child, we all know our beginning, but who knows his end? Y^e best use th^t can be made of fair $weath^r$ is to provide against foule & 't is great discretion & of noe small commendations for a young woman betymes to shew herself housewifly & frugal. Y^r Mother neither Maide nor wife ever yett bestowed forty pounds a yeare on herself & yett if you never fall und^r a worse reputation in y^e world th^n she (I thank God for it) hath hitherto done, you need not repine at it, & you cannot be ignorant of y^e difference th^t was between my fortune & what you are to expect. You ought likewise to consider th^t you have seven brothers & sisters & you are all one man's children & therefore it is very unreasonable that one should expect to be preferred in finery soe much above all y^e rest for 't is impossible you should soe much mistake

y^r^ ffather's condition as to fancy he is able to allow every one of you forty pounds a yeare a piece, for such an allowance with the charge of their diett over and above will amount to at least five hundred pounds a yeare, a sum y^r^ poor ffather can ill spare, besides doe but bethink y^r^self what a ridiculous sight it will be when y^r^ grandmoth^r^ & you come to us to have noe less th^n^ seven waiting gentlewomen in one house, for what reason can you give why every one of y^r^ Sist^rs^ should not have every one of y^m^ a Maide as well as you, & though you may spare to pay y^r^ maide's wages out of y^r^ allowance yett you take no care of y^e^ unnecessary charge you put y^r^ ffath^r^ to in y^r^ increase of his family, whereas if it were not a piece of pride to have y^e^ name of keeping y^r^ maide she y^t^ waits on y^r^ good Grandmother might easily doe as formerly you know she hath done, all y^e^ business you have for a maide unless as you grow old^r^ you grow a veryer Foole which God forbid!

Poll, you live in a place where you see great plenty & splendor, but let not y^e^ allurements of earthly pleasures tempt you to forget or neglect y^e^ duty of a good Christian in dressing y^r^ bett^r^ part which is y^r^ soule, as will best please God. I am not against y^r^ going decent & neate as becomes y^r^ ffathers daughter but to clothe y^r^self rich & be running into every gaudy fashion can never become y^r^ circumstances & instead of doing you creditt & getting you a good prefer^nt^ it is y^e^ readiest way you can take to fright all sober men from ever thinking of matching th^m^selves with women

that live above thy^{r} fortune, & if this be a wise way of spending money judge you! & besides, doe but reflect what an od sight it will be to a stranger that comes to our house to see y^{r} Grandmoth^{r} y^{r} Moth^{r} & all y^{r} Sisters in a plane dress & you only trick^{d} up like a bartlemewbabby — you know what sort of people those are th^{t} can't faire well but they must cry rost meate now what effect could you imagine y^{r} writing in such a high straine to y^{r} Sisters could have but eithe^{r} to provoke th^{m} to envy you or murmur against us. I must tell you neith^{r} of y^{r} Sisters have ever had twenty pounds a yeare allowance from us yett, & yett they^{r} dress hath not disparaged neith^{r} th^{m} nor us & without incurring y^{e} censure of simple covetousness they will have some what to shew out of their saving that will doe th^{m} creditt & I expect y^{t} you th^{t} are theyr elder Sister sh^{d} rather sett th^{m} examples of y^{e} like nature th^{n} tempt th^{m} from treading in y^{e} steps of their good Grandmoth^{r} & poor Moth^{r}. This is not half what might be saide on this occasion but believing thee to be a very good natured dutyfull child I sh^{d} have thought it a great deal too much but y^{t} having in my coming hither past through many most desperate dangers I cannot forbear thinking & preparing myself for all events, & therefore not knowing how it may please God to dispose of us I conclude it my duty to God & thee my d^{r} child to lay this matter as home to thee as I could, assuring you my daily prayers are not nor shall not be wanting that God may give you grace always to remember to make a right use of this truly affectionate counsell of

y^r^ poor Moth^r^. & though I speak very plaine downright english to you yett I would not have you doubt but that I love you as hartily as any child I have & if you serve God and take good courses I promise you my kindness to you shall be according to y^r^ own hart's desire, for you may be certain I can aime at nothing in what I have now writ but y^r^ real good which to promote shall be y^e^ study & care day & night

Of my dear Poll
thy truly affectionate Moth^r^.

ELIZA CHANDOS.

Pera of Galata, May y^e^ 6th 1686.

P. S. — Thy ffath^r^ & I send thee our blessing, & all thy broth^rs^ & sist^rs^ they^r^ service. Our harty & affectionate service to my broth^r^ & sist^r^ Childe & all my dear cozens. When you see my Lady Worster & cozen Howlands pray present th^m^ my most humble service.

This letter shows that the wealth acquired by trade was already manifesting itself in contrast with the straitened circumstances of some of the nobility. Mary Brydges's "poor ffather," in whose household economy was necessary, was the King of England's ambassador at Constantinople; the grandmother, who lived in "great plenty and splendor," was the widow of a Turkey merchant. But then, as now, it would seem, rank had the power of attracting and absorbing wealth.

At Ashe also Jane became acquainted with a member of the Lefroy family, who was still living when I began these memoirs, a few months ago;

the Right Hon. Thomas Lefroy, late Chief Justice of Ireland. One must look back more than seventy years to reach the time when these two bright young persons were, for a short time, intimately acquainted with each other, and then separated on their several courses, never to meet again; both destined to attain some distinction in their different ways, — one to survive the other for more than half a century, yet in his extreme old age to remember and speak, as he sometimes did, of his former companion as one to be much admired, and not easily forgotten by those who had ever known her.

Mrs. Lefroy herself was a remarkable person. Her rare endowments of goodness, talents, graceful person, and engaging manners, were sufficient to secure her a prominent place in any society into which she was thrown; while her enthusiastic eagerness of disposition rendered her especially attractive to a clever and lively girl. She was killed by a fall from her horse on Jane's birthday, Dec. 16, 1804. The following lines to her memory were written by Jane four years afterwards, when she was thirty-three years old. They are given, not for their merits as poetry, but to show how deep and lasting was the impression made by the elder friend on the mind of the younger: —

TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. LEFROY.

1.

The day returns again, my natal day;
What mix'd emotions in my mind arise!
Beloved Friend; four years have passed away
Since thou wert snatched for ever from our eyes.

2.

The day commemorative of my birth,
Bestowing life and light and hope to me,
Brings back the hour which was thy last on earth.
Oh, bitter pang of torturing memory!

3.

Angelic woman! past my power to praise
In language meet thy talents, temper, mind,
Thy solid worth, thy captivating grace,
Thou friend and ornament of human kind.

4.

But come, fond Fancy, thou indulgent power;
Hope is desponding, chill, severe, to thee:
Bless thou this little portion of an hour;
Let me behold her as she used to be.

5.

I see her here with all her smiles benign,
Her looks of eager love, her accents sweet,
That voice and countenance almost divine,
Expression, harmony, alike complete.

6.

Listen! It is not sound alone, 't is sense,
'T is genius, taste, and tenderness of soul:
'T is genuine warmth of heart without pretence,
And purity of mind that crowns the whole.

7.

She speaks! 'T is eloquence, that grace of tongue
So rare, so lovely, never misapplied
By her, to palliate vice, or deck a wrong:
She speaks and argues but on virtue's side.

8.

Hers is the energy of soul sincere:
Her Christian spirit, ignorant to feign,

Seeks but to comfort, heal, enlighten, cheer,
Confer a pleasure or prevent a pain.

9.

Can aught enhance such goodness? yes, to me
Her partial favor from my earliest years
Consummates all: ah, give me but to see
Her smile of love! The vision disappears.

10.

'T is past and gone. We meet no more below.
Short is the cheat of Fancy o'er the tomb.
Oh, might I hope to equal bliss to go,
To meet thee, angel, in thy future home!

11.

Fain would I feel an union with thy fate:
Fain would I seek to draw an omen fair
From this connection in our earthly date.
Indulge the harmless weakness. Reason, spare.

The loss of their first home is generally a great grief to young persons of strong feeling and lively imagination; and Jane was exceedingly unhappy when she was told that her father, now seventy years of age, had determined to resign his duties to his eldest son, who was to be his successor in the rectory of Steventon, and to remove with his wife and daughters to Bath. Jane had been absent from home when this resolution was taken; and, as her father was always rapid both in forming his resolutions and in acting on them, she had little time to reconcile herself to the change.

A wish has sometimes been expressed that some of Jane Austen's letters should be published.

Some entire letters, and many extracts, will be given in this Memoir; but the reader must be warned not to expect too much from them. With regard to accuracy of language, indeed every word of them might be printed without correction. The style is always clear, and generally animated, while a vein of humor continually gleams through the whole; but the materials may be thought inferior to the execution, for they treat only of the details of domestic life. There is in them no notice of politics or public events; scarcely any discussions on literature, or other subjects of general interest. They may be said to resemble the nest which some little bird builds of the materials nearest at hand, — of the twigs and mosses supplied by the tree in which it is placed, curiously constructed out of the simplest matters.

Her letters have very seldom the date of the year, or the signature of her Christian name at full length; but it has been easy to ascertain their dates, either from the post-mark or from their contents.

The two following letters are the earliest that I have seen. They were both written in November, 1800, before the family removed from Steventon. Some of the same circumstances are referred to in both.

The first is to her sister Cassandra, who was then staying with their brother Edward at Godmersham Park, Kent: —

Steventon, Saturday evening, Nov. 8th.

My dear Cassandra, — I thank you for so speedy a return to my two last, and particularly

thank you for your anecdote of Charlotte Graham and her cousin, Harriet Bailey, which has very much amused both my mother and myself. If you can learn anything farther of that interesting affair, I hope you will mention it. I have two messages; let me get rid of them, and then my paper will be my own. Mary fully intended writing to you by Mr. Chute's frank, and only happened entirely to forget it, but will write soon; and my father wishes Edward to send him a memorandum of the price of the hops. The tables are come, and give general contentment. I had not expected that they would so perfectly suit the fancy of us all three, or that we should so well agree in the disposition of them; but nothing except their own surface can have been smoother. The two ends put together form one constant table for everything, and the centrepiece stands exceedingly well under the glass, and holds a great deal most commodiously, without looking awkwardly. They are both covered with green baize, and send their best love. The Pembroke has got its destination by the sideboard, and my mother has great delight in keeping her money and papers locked up. The little table which used to stand there has most conveniently taken itself off into the best bedroom; and we are now in want only of the chiffonniere, is neither finished nor come. So much for that subject; I now come to another, of a very different nature, as other subjects are very apt to be. Earle Harwood has been again giving uneasiness to his family and talk to the neighborhood: in the present instance, however, he is only unfortunate, and not in fault.

About ten days ago, in cocking a pistol in the guard-room at Marcau, he accidentally shot himself through the thigh. Two young Scotch surgeons in the island were polite enough to propose taking off the thigh at once, but to that he would not consent; and accordingly in his wounded state was put on board a cutter and conveyed to Haslar Hospital, at Gosport, where the bullet was extracted, and where he now is, I hope, in a fair way of doing well. The surgeon of the hospital wrote to the family on the occasion, and John Harwood went down to him immediately, attended by James,[1] whose object in going was to be the means of bringing back the earliest intelligence to Mr. and Mrs. Harwood, whose anxious sufferings, particularly those of the latter, have of course been dreadful. They went down on Tuesday, and James came back the next day, bringing such favorable accounts as greatly to lessen the distress of the family at Deane, though it will probably be a long while before Mrs. Harwood can be quite at ease. One most material comfort, however, they have, — the assurance of its being really an accidental wound, which is not only positively declared by Earle himself, but is likewise testified by the particular direction of the bullet. Such a wound could not have been received in a duel. At present he is going on very well, but the surgeon will not declare him to be in no danger.[2] Mr. Heathcote met with a genteel little accident the other day in hunting. He got off to lead his horse over a

[1] James, the writer's eldest brother.

[2] The limb was saved.

hedge, or a house, or something, and his horse in his haste trod upon his leg, or rather ankle, I believe, and it is not certain whether the small bone is not broke. Martha has accepted Mary's invitation for Lord Portsmouth's ball. He has not yet sent out his own invitations, but that does not signify; Martha comes, and a ball there is to be. I think it will be too early in her mother's absence for me to return with her.

Sunday Evening. — We have had a dreadful storm of wind in the fore part of this day, which has done a great deal of mischief among our trees. I was sitting alone in the dining-room when an odd kind of crash startled me; in a moment afterwards it was repeated. I then went to the window, which I reached just in time to see the last of our two highly valued elms descend into the Sweep ! ! ! ! ! The other, which had fallen, I suppose, in the first crash and which was the nearest to the pond, taking a more easterly direction, sunk among our screen of chestnuts and firs, knocking down one spruce-fir, beating off the head of another, and stripping the two corner chestnuts of several branches in its fall. This is not all. One large elm, out of the two on the left-hand side as you enter what I call the elm-walk, was likewise blown down; the maple bearing the weathercock was broke in two; and what I regret more than all the rest is, that all the three elms which grew in Hall's meadow, and gave such ornament to it, are gone; two were blown down, and the other so much injured that it cannot stand. I am happy to add, however, that no greater evil than the

loss of trees has been the consequence of the storm in this place, or in our immediate neighborhood. We grieve, therefore, in some comfort.

I am yours ever, J. A.

The next letter, written four days later than the former, was addressed to Miss Lloyd, an intimate friend, whose sister (my mother) was married to Jane's eldest brother: —

Steventon, Wednesday evening, Nov. 12th.

My dear Martha, — I did not receive your note yesterday till after Charlotte had left Deane, or I would have sent my answer by her, instead of being the means, as I now must be, of lessening the elegance of your new dress for the Hurstbourne ball by the value of *3d.* You are very good in wishing to see me at Ibthorp so soon, and I am equally good in wishing to come to you. I believe our merit in that respect is much upon a par, our self-denial mutually strong. Having paid this tribute of praise to the virtue of both, I shall here have done with panegyric, and proceed to plain matter of fact. In about a fortnight's time I hope to be with you. I have two reasons for not being able to come before. I wish so to arrange my visit as to spend some days with you after your mother's return. In the 1st place, that I may have the pleasure of seeing her, and in the 2nd, that I may have a better chance of bringing you back with me. Your promise in my favor was not quite absolute; but if your will is not perverse, you and I will do all in our power to overcome your scruples of con-

science. I hope we shall meet next week to talk all this over, till we have tired ourselves with the very idea of my visit before my visit begins. Our invitations for the 19th are arrived, and very curiously are they worded.[1] Mary mentioned to you yesterday poor Earle's unfortunate accident, I dare say. He does not seem to be going on very well. The two or three last posts have brought less and less favorable accounts of him. John Harwood has gone to Gosport again to-day. We have two families of friends now who are in a most anxious state; for though by a note from Catherine this morning there seems now to be a revival of hope at Manydown, its continuance may be too reasonably doubted. Mr. Heathcote,[2] however, who has broken the small bone of his leg, is so good as to be going on very well. It would be really too much to have three people to care for.

You distress me cruelly by your request about books. I cannot think of any to bring with me, nor have I any idea of our wanting them. I come to you to be talked to, not to read or hear reading; I can do that at home; and indeed I am now laying in a stock of intelligence to pour out on you as

[1] The invitation, the ball dress, and some other things in this and the preceding letter refer to a ball annually given at Hurstbourne Park, on the anniversary of the Earl of Portsmouth's marriage with his first wife. He was the Lord Portsmouth whose eccentricities afterwards became notorious; and the invitations, as well as other arrangements about these balls, were of a peculiar character.

[2] The father of Sir William Heathcote, of Hursley, who was married to a daughter of Mr. Bigg Wither, of Manydown, and lived in the neighborhood.

my share of the conversation. I am reading Henry's History of England, which I will repeat to you in any manner you may prefer, — either in a loose, desultory, unconnected stream, or dividing my recital, as the historian divides it himself, into seven parts: The Civil and Military; Religion; Constitution; Learning and Learned Men; Arts and Sciences; Commerce, Coins, and Shipping; and Manners. So that for every evening in the week there will be a different subject. The Friday's lot — Commerce, Coins, and Shipping — you will find the least entertaining; but the next evening's portion will make amends. With such a provision on my part, if you will do yours by repeating the French Grammar, and Mrs. Stent[1] will now and then ejaculate some wonder about the cocks and hens, what can we want? Farewell for a short time. We all unite in best love, and I am your very affectionate

J. A.

The two next letters must have been written early in 1801, after the removal from Steventon had been decided on, but before it had taken place. They refer to the two brothers who were at sea, and give some idea of a kind of anxieties and uncertainties to which sisters are seldom subject in these days of peace, steamers, and electric telegraphs. At that time ships were often windbound or becalmed, or driven wide of their destination; and sometimes they had orders to alter their course for some secret service; not to mention the chance of conflict with a vessel of superior power, — no im-

[1] A very dull old lady, then residing with Mrs. Lloyd.

probable occurrence before the battle of Trafalgar. Information about relatives on board men-of-war was scarce and scanty, and often picked up by hearsay or chance means; and every scrap of intelligence was proportionably valuable: —

My dear Cassandra, — I should not have thought it necessary to write to you so soon, but for the arrival of a letter from Charles to myself. It was written last Saturday from off the "Start," and conveyed to Popham Lane by Captain Boyle on his way to Midgham. He came from Lisbon in the "Endymion." I will copy Charles's account of his conjectures about Frank: "He has not seen my brother lately, nor does he expect to find him arrived, as he met Captain Inglis at Rhodes, going up to take command of the 'Petrel,' as he was coming down; but supposes he will arrive in less than a fortnight from this time, in some ship which is expected to reach England about that time with despatches from Sir Ralph Abercrombie." The event must show what sort of a conjuror Captain Boyle is. The "Endymion" has not been plagued with any more prizes. Charles spent three pleasant days in Lisbon.

They were very well satisfied with their royal passenger,[1] whom they found jolly and affable, who talks of Lady Augusta as his wife, and seems much attached to her.

When this letter was written, the "Endymion" was becalmed, but Charles hoped to reach

[1] The Duke of Sussex, son of George III., married, without royal consent, to the Lady Augusta Murray.

Portsmouth by Monday or Tuesday. He received my letter, communicating our plans, before he left England; was much surprised, of course, but is quite reconciled to them, and means to come to Steventon once more while Steventon is ours.

From a letter written later in the same year: —

"Charles has received 30*l.* for his share of the privateer, and expects 10*l.* more; but of what avail is it to take prizes if he lays out the produce in presents to his sisters? He has been buying gold chains and topaz crosses for us. He must be well scolded. The 'Endymion' has already received orders for taking troops to Egypt, which I should not like at all if I did not trust to Charles being removed from her somehow or other before she sails. He knows nothing of his own destination, he says, but desires me to write directly, as the 'Endymion' will probably sail in three or four days. He will receive my yesterday's letter, and I shall write again by this post to thank and reproach him. We shall be unbearably fine."

CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL FROM STEVENTON — RESIDENCES AT BATH AND AT SOUTHAMPTON — SETTLING AT CHAWTON.

THE family removed to Bath in the spring of 1801, where they resided, — first at No. 4 Sydney Terrace, and afterwards in Green Park Buildings. I do not know whether they were at all attracted to Bath by the circumstance that Mrs. Austen's only brother, Mr. Leigh Perrot, spent part of every year there. The name of Perrot, together with a small estate at Northleigh in Oxfordshire, had been bequeathed to him by a great-uncle. I must devote a few sentences to this very old and now extinct branch of the Perrot family; for one of the last survivors, Jane Perrot, married to a Walker, was Jane Austen's great-grandmother, from whom she derived her Christian name. The Perrots were settled in Pembrokeshire, at least as early as the thirteenth century. They were probably some of the settlers whom the policy of our Plantagenet kings placed in that county, which thence acquired the name of "England beyond Wales," for the double purpose of keeping open a communication with Ireland from Milford Haven, and of overawing the Welsh. One of the family seems to have carried out this latter purpose very vigorously; for it is recorded of him that he slew

twenty-six men of Kemaes, a district of Wales, and one wolf. The manner in which the two kinds of game are classed together, and the disproportion of numbers, are remarkable; but probably at that time the wolves had been so closely killed down, that lupicide was become a more rare and distinguished exploit than homicide. The last of this family died about 1778, and their property was divided between Leighs and Musgraves, the larger portion going to the latter. Mr. Leigh Perrot pulled down the mansion, and sold the estate to the Duke of Marlborough; and the name of these Perrots is now to be found only on some monuments in the church of Northleigh.

Mr. Leigh Perrot was also one of several cousins to whom a life interest in the Stoneleigh property in Warwickshire was left, after the extinction of the earlier Leigh peerage; but he compromised his claim to the succession in his lifetime. He married a niece of Sir Montague Cholmeley of Lincolnshire. He was a man of considerable natural power, with much of the wit of his uncle, the Master of Balliol, and wrote clever epigrams and riddles, some of which, though without his name, found their way into print; but he lived a very retired life, dividing his time between Bath and his place in Berkshire called Scarlets. Jane's letters from Bath make frequent mention of this uncle and aunt.

The unfinished story now published under the title of "The Watsons" must have been written during the author's residence in Bath. In the autumn of 1804 she spent some weeks at Lyme,

and became acquainted with the Cobb, which she afterwards made memorable for the fall of Louisa Musgrove. In February, 1805, her father died at Bath, and was buried at Walcot Church. The widow and daughters went into lodgings for a few months, and then removed to Southampton. The only records that I can find about her during those four years are the three following letters to her sister, — one from Lyme, the others from Bath. They show that she went a good deal into society, in a quiet way, chiefly with ladies; and that her eyes were always open to minute traits of character in those with whom she associated: —

Extract from a Letter from Jane Austen to her Sister.

Lyme, Friday, Sept. 14 (1804).

My dear Cassandra, — I take the first sheet of fine striped paper to thank you for your letter from Weymouth, and express my hopes of your being at Ibthorp before this time. I expect to hear that you reached it yesterday evening, being able to get as far as Blandford on Wednesday. Your account of Weymouth contains nothing which strikes me so forcibly as there being no ice in the town. For every other vexation I was in some measure prepared, and particularly for your disappointment in not seeing the Royal Family go on board on Tuesday, having already heard from Mr. Crawford that he had seen you in the very act of being too late. But for there being no ice, what could prepare me? You found my letter at Andover, I hope, yesterday, and have now for

many hours been satisfied that your kind anxiety on my behalf was as much thrown away as kind anxiety usually is. I continue quite well; in proof of which I have bathed again this morning. It was absolutely necessary that I should have the little fever and indisposition which I had; it has been all the fashion this week in Lyme. We are quite settled in our lodgings by this time, as you may suppose, and everything goes on in the usual order. The servants behave very well, and make no difficulties, though nothing certainly can exceed the inconvenience of the offices, except the general dirtiness of the house and furniture and all its inhabitants. I endeavor, as far as I can, to supply your place, and be useful, and keep things in order. I detect dirt in the water decanters as fast as I can, and keep everything as it was under your administration. . . . The ball last night was pleasant, but not full for Thursday. My father stayed contentedly till half-past nine (we went a little after eight), and then walked home with James and a lantern, though I believe the lantern was not lit, as the moon was up; but sometimes this lantern may be a great convenience to him. My mother and I stayed about an hour later. Nobody asked me the two first dances; the two next I danced with Mr. Crawford, and had I chosen to stay longer might have danced with Mr. Granville, Mrs. Granville's son, whom my dear friend Miss A. introduced to me, or with a new odd-looking man who had been eying me for some time, and at last, without any introduction, asked me if I meant to dance again. I think he must be Irish

by his ease, and because I imagine him to belong to the hon^bl B.'s, who are son and son's wife of an Irish viscount, bold, queer-looking people, just fit to be quality at Lyme. I called yesterday morning (ought it not in strict propriety to be termed yester-morning?) on Miss A., and was introduced to her father and mother. Like other young ladies, she is considerably genteeler than her parents. Mrs. A. sat darning a pair of stockings the whole of my visit. But do not mention this at home, lest a warning should act as an example. We afterwards walked together for an hour on the Cobb; she is very conversable in a common way; I do not perceive wit or genius, but she has sense and some degree of taste, and her manners are very engaging. She seems to like people rather too easily.

Yours affect^ly,

J. A.

Letter from Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra at Ibthorp, alluding to the sudden death of Mrs. Lloyd at that place: —

25 Gay Street (Bath), Monday, April 8, 1805.

My dear Cassandra, — Here is a day for you. Did Bath or Ibthorp ever see such an 8th of April? It is March and April together, — the glare of the one and the warmth of the other. We do nothing but walk about. As far as your means will admit, I hope you profit by such weather too. I dare say you are already the better for change of place. We were out again last night. Miss Irvine

invited us, when I met her in the Crescent, to drink tea with them, but I rather declined it, having no idea that my mother would be disposed for another evening visit there so soon; but when I gave her the message, I found her very well inclined to go; and accordingly, on leaving chapel, we walked to Lansdown. This morning we have been to see Miss Chamberlaine look hot on horseback. Seven years and four months ago we went to the same riding-house to see Miss Lefroy's performance![1] What a different set are we now moving in! But seven years, I suppose, are enough to change every pore of one's skin and every feeling of one's mind. We did not walk long in the Crescent yesterday. It was hot and not crowded enough; so we went into the field, and passed close by S. T. and Miss S.[2] again. I have not yet seen her face, but neither her dress nor air have anything of the dash or stylishness which the Browns talked of, — quite the contrary; indeed, her dress is not even smart, and her appearance very quiet. Miss Irvine says she is never speaking a word. Poor wretch! I am afraid she is *en pénitence.* Here has been that excellent Mrs. Coulthart calling while my mother was out and I was believed to be so. I always respected her as a good-hearted, friendly woman. And the Browns have been here; I find their affidavits on the table. The "Ambuscade" reached Gibraltar on the 9th of March, and found all well; so say the papers. We have had

[1] Here is evidence that Jane Austen was acquainted with Bath before it became her residence in 1801. See p. 195.

[2] A gentleman and lady lately engaged to be married.

no letters from anybody, but we expect to hear from Edward to-morrow, and from you soon afterwards. How happy they are at Godmersham now! I shall be very glad of a letter from Ibthorp, that I may know how you all are, but particularly yourself. This is nice weather for Mrs. J. Austen's going to Speen, and I hope she will have a pleasant visit there. I expect a prodigious account of the christening dinner; perhaps it brought you at last into the company of Miss Dundas again.

Tuesday. — I received your letter last night, and wish it may be soon followed by another to say that all is over; but I cannot help thinking that nature will struggle again, and produce a revival. Poor woman! May her end be peaceful and easy as the exit we have witnessed! And I dare say it will. If there is no revival, suffering must be all over; even the consciousness of existence, I suppose, was gone when you wrote. The nonsense I have been writing in this and in my last letter seems out of place at such a time, but I will not mind it; it will do you no harm, and nobody else will be attacked by it. I am heartily glad that you can speak so comfortably of your own health and looks, though I can scarcely comprehend the latter being really approved. Could travelling fifty miles produce such an immediate change? You were looking very poorly here, and everybody seemed sensible of it. Is there a charm in a hack post-chaise? But if there were, Mrs. Craven's carriage might have undone it all. I am much obliged to you for the time and trouble you have bestowed on Mary's cap, and am glad it

pleases her; but it will prove a useless gift at present, I suppose. Will not she leave Ibthorp on her mother's death? As a companion you are all that Martha can be supposed to want; and in that light, under these circumstances, your visit will indeed have been well timed.

Thursday. — I was not able to go on yesterday; all my wit and leisure were bestowed on letters to Charles and Henry. To the former I wrote in consequence of my mother's having seen in the papers that the "Urania" was waiting at Portsmouth for the convoy for Halifax. This is nice, as it is only three weeks ago that you wrote by the "Camilla." I wrote to Henry because I had a letter from him in which he desired to hear from me very soon. His to me was most affectionate and kind, as well as entertaining; there is no merit to him in that; he cannot help being amusing. He offers to meet us on the sea-coast, if the plan of which Edward gave him some hint takes place. Will not this be making the execution of such a plan more desirable and delightful than ever? He talks of the rambles we took together last summer with pleasing affection.

Yours ever,

J. A.

From the Same to the Same.

Gay St., Sunday Evening,
April 21 (1805).

My dear Cassandra, — I am much obliged to you for writing to me again so soon; your letter yesterday was quite an unexpected pleasure. Poor Mrs. Stent! it has been her lot to be always in the

way; but we must be merciful, for perhaps in time we may come to be Mrs. Stents ourselves, unequal to anything, and unwelcome to everybody. . . . My morning engagement was with the Cookes, and our party consisted of George and Mary, a Mr. L., Miss B., who had been with us at the concert, and the youngest Miss W. Not Julia, — we have done with her; she is very ill, — but Mary. Mary W.'s turn is actually come to be grown up, and have a fine complexion, and wear great square muslin shawls. I have not expressly enumerated myself among the party; but there I was, and my cousin George was very kind, and talked sense to me every now and then, in the intervals of his more animated fooleries with Miss B., who is very young and rather handsome, and whose gracious manners, ready wit, and solid remarks put me somewhat in mind of my old acquaintance L. L. There was a monstrous deal of stupid quizzing and commonplace nonsense talked, but scarcely any wit; all that bordered on it or on sense came from my cousin George, whom altogether I like very well. Mr. B. seems nothing more than a tall young man. My evening engagement and walk was with Miss A., who had called on me the day before, and gently upbraided me in her turn with a change of manners to her since she had been in Bath, or at least of late. Unlucky me! that my notice should be of such consequence, and my manners so bad! She was so well disposed and so reasonable that I soon forgave her, and made this engagement with her in proof of it. She is really an agreeable girl, so I think I may like her; and her great want of a

companion at home, which may well make any tolerable acquaintance important to her, gives her another claim on my attention. I shall endeavor as much as possible to keep my intimacies in their proper place, and prevent their clashing. Among so many friends, it will be well if I do not get into a scrape; and now here is Miss Blashford come. I should have gone distracted if the Bullers had stayed. . . . When I tell you I have been visiting a countess this morning, you will immediately, with great justice but no truth, guess it to be Lady Roden. No: it is Lady Leven, the mother of Lord Balgonie. On receiving a message from Lord and Lady Leven through the Mackays, declaring their intention of waiting on us, we thought it right to go to them. I hope we have not done too much; but the friends and admirers of Charles must be attended to. They seem very reasonable, good sort of people, very civil, and full of his praise.[1] We were shown at first into an empty drawing-room; and presently in came his lordship, not knowing who we were, to apologize for the servant's mistake, and to say himself what was untrue, that Lady Leven was not within. He is a tall, gentlemanlike-looking man, with spectacles, and rather deaf. After sitting with him ten minutes, we walked away; but Lady Leven coming out of the dining-parlor as we passed the door, we were obliged to attend her back to it, and pay our visit over again. She is a stout

[1] It seems that Charles Austen, then first-lieutenant of the "Endymion," had had an opportunity of showing attention and kindness to some of Lord Leven's family.

woman, with a very handsome face. By this means we had the pleasure of hearing Charles's praises twice over. They think themselves excessively obliged to him, and estimate him so highly as to wish Lord Balgonie, when he is quite recovered, to go out to him. There is a pretty little Lady Marianne of the party, to be shaken hands with, and asked if she remembered Mr. Austen. . . .

I shall write to Charles by the next packet, unless you tell me in the mean time of your intending to do it.

Believe me, if you chuse,

Yr affte Sister.

Jane did not estimate too highly the "Cousin George" mentioned in the foregoing letter, who might easily have been superior in sense and wit to the rest of the party. He was the Rev. George Leigh Cooke, long known and respected at Oxford, where he held important offices, and had the privilege of helping to form the minds of men more eminent than himself. As Tutor in Corpus Christi College, he became instructor to some of the most distinguished undergraduates of that time; amongst others to Dr. Arnold, the Rev. John Keble, and Sir John Coleridge. The latter has mentioned him in terms of affectionate regard, both in his Memoir of Keble, and in a letter which appears in Dean Stanley's "Life of Arnold." Mr. Cooke was also an impressive preacher of earnest, awakening sermons. I remember to have heard it observed by some of my undergraduate friends that,

after all, there was more good to be got from George Cooke's plain sermons than from much of the more labored oratory of the University pulpit. He was frequently Examiner in the schools, and occupied the chair of the Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy, from 1810 to 1853.

Before the end of 1805, the little family party removed to Southampton. They resided in a commodious old-fashioned house in a corner of Castle Square.

I have no letters of my aunt, nor any other record of her, during her four years' residence at Southampton; and though I now began to know, and, what was the same thing, to love her myself, yet my observations were only those of a young boy, and were not capable of penetrating her character or estimating her powers. I have, however, a lively recollection of some local circumstances at Southampton, and as they refer chiefly to things which have been long ago swept away, I will record them. My grandmother's house had a pleasant garden, bounded on one side by the old city walls; the top of this wall was sufficiently wide to afford a pleasant walk, with an extensive view, easily accessible to ladies by steps. This must have been a part of the identical walls which witnessed the embarkation of Henry V. before the battle of Agincourt, and the detection of the conspiracy of Cambridge, Scroop, and Grey, which Shakspeare has made so picturesque; when, according to the chorus in Henry V., the citizens saw

> "The well-appointed King at Hampton Pier
> Embark his royalty."

Among the records of the town of Southampton, they have a minute and authentic account, drawn up at that time, of the encampment of Henry V. near the town, before his embarkment for France. It is remarkable that the place where the army was encamped, then a low level plain, is now entirely covered by the sea, and is called Westport.[1] At that time Castle Square was occupied by a fantastic edifice, too large for the space in which it stood, though too small to accord well with its castellated style, erected by the second Marquis of Lansdowne, half-brother to the well-known statesman, who succeeded him in the title. The Marchioness had a light phaeton, drawn by six, and sometimes by eight, little ponies, — each pair decreasing in size, and becoming lighter in color, through all the grades of dark brown, light brown, bay, and chestnut, as it was placed farther away from the carriage. The two leading pairs were managed by two boyish postilions, the two pairs nearest to the carriage were driven in hand. It was a delight to me to look down from the window and see this fairy equipage put together; for the premises of this castle were so contracted that the whole process went on in the little space that remained of the open square. Like other fairy works, however, it all proved evanescent. Not only carriage and ponies, but castle itself, soon vanished away, "like the baseless fabric of a vision." On the death of the Marquis, in 1809, the castle was pulled down. Few probably remember its existence; and any one who might visit the

[1] See Wharton's note to Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare.

place now would wonder how it ever could have stood there.

In 1809 Mr. Knight was able to offer his mother the choice of two houses on his property, — one near his usual residence at Godmersham Park in Kent; the other near Chawton House, his occasional residence in Hampshire. The latter was chosen; and in that year the mother and daughters, together with Miss Lloyd, a near connection who lived with them, settled themselves at Chawton Cottage.

Chawton may be called the *second*, as well as the *last* home of Jane Austen; for during the temporary residences of the party at Bath and Southampton she was only a sojourner in a strange land; but here she found a real home amongst her own people. It so happened that during her residence at Chawton circumstances brought several of her brothers and their families within easy distance of the house. Chawton must also be considered the place most closely connected with her career as a writer; for there it was that, in the maturity of her mind, she either wrote or rearranged and prepared for publication the books by which she has become known to the world. This was the home where, after a few years, while still in the prime of life, she began to droop and wither away, and which she left only in the last stage of her illness, yielding to the persuasion of friends hoping against hope.

This house stood in the village of Chawton, about a mile from Alton, on the right-hand side, just where the road to Winchester branches off from that to Gosport. It was so close to the road

that the front door opened upon it; while a very narrow enclosure, paled in on each side, protected the building from danger of collision with any runaway vehicle. I believe it had been originally built for an inn, for which purpose it was certainly well situated. Afterwards it had been occupied by Mr. Knight's steward; but by some additions to the house, and some judicious planting and screening, it was made a pleasant and commodious abode. Mr. Knight was experienced and adroit at such arrangements, and this was a labor of love to him. A good-sized entrance and two sitting-rooms made the length of the house, all intended originally to look upon the road, but the large drawing-room window was blocked up and turned into a bookcase, and another opened at the side which gave to view only turf and trees, as a high wooden fence and hornbeam hedge shut out the Winchester road, which skirted the whole length of the little domain. Trees were planted each side to form a shrubbery walk, carried round the enclosure, which gave a sufficient space for ladies' exercise. There was a pleasant irregular mixture of hedgerow and gravel walk and orchard, and long grass for mowing, arising from two or three little enclosures having been thrown together. The house itself was quite as good as the generality of parsonage-houses then were, and much in the same style; and was capable of receiving other members of the family as frequent visitors. It was sufficiently well furnished; everything inside and out was kept in good repair, and it was altogether a comfortable and ladylike establishment,

though the means which supported it were not large.

I give this description because some interest is generally taken in the residence of a popular writer. Cowper's unattractive house in the street of Olney has been pointed out to visitors, and has even attained the honor of an engraving in Southey's edition of his works; but I cannot recommend any admirer of Jane Austen to undertake a pilgrimage to this spot. The building indeed still stands, but it has lost all that gave it its character. After the death of Mrs. Cassandra Austen, in 1845, it was divided into tenements for laborers, and the grounds reverted to ordinary uses.

CHAPTER V.

Description of Jane Austen's Person, Character, and Tastes.

As my memoir has now reached the period when I saw a great deal of my aunt, and was old enough to understand something of her value, I will here attempt a description of her person, mind, and habits. In person she was very attractive; her figure was rather tall and slender, her step light and firm, and her whole appearance expressive of health and animation. In complexion she was a clear brunette with a rich color; she had full round cheeks, with mouth and nose small and well formed, bright hazel eyes, and brown hair forming natural curls close round her face. If not so regularly handsome as her sister, yet her countenance had a peculiar charm of its own to the eyes of most beholders. At the time of which I am now writing, she never was seen, either morning or evening, without a cap; I believe that she and her sister were generally thought to have taken to the garb of middle age earlier than their years or their looks required; and that, though remarkably neat in their dress as in all their ways, they were scarcely sufficiently regardful of the fashionable or the becoming.

She was not highly accomplished according to the present standard. Her sister drew well, and

it is from a drawing of hers that the likeness prefixed to this volume has been taken. Jane herself was fond of music, and had a sweet voice, both in singing and in conversation; in her youth she had received some instruction on the pianoforte; and at Chawton she practised daily, chiefly before breakfast. I believe she did so partly that she might not disturb the rest of the party, who were less fond of music. In the evening she would sometimes sing, to her own accompaniment, some simple old songs, the words and airs of which, now never heard, still linger in my memory.

She read French with facility, and knew something of Italian. In those days German was no more thought of than Hindostanee, as part of a lady's education. In history she followed the old guides, — Goldsmith, Hume, and Robertson. Critical inquiry into the usually received statements of the old historians was scarcely begun. The history of the early kings of Rome had not yet been dissolved into legend. Historic characters lay before the reader's eyes in broad light or shade, not much broken up by details. The virtues of King Henry VIII. were yet undiscovered, nor had much light been thrown on the inconsistencies of Queen Elizabeth; the one was held to be an unmitigated tyrant and an embodied Blue Beard, the other a perfect model of wisdom and policy. Jane, when a girl, had strong political opinions, especially about the affairs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She was a vehement defender of Charles I. and his grandmother Mary; but I think it was rather from an impulse of

feeling than from any inquiry into the evidences by which they must be condemned or acquitted. As she grew up, the politics of the day occupied very little of her attention; but she probably shared the feeling of moderate Toryism which prevailed in her family. She was well acquainted with the old periodicals from the "Spectator" downwards. Her knowledge of Richardson's works was such as no one is likely again to acquire, now that the multitude and the merits of our light literature have called off the attention of readers from that great master. Every circumstance narrated in "Sir Charles Grandison," all that was ever said or done in the cedar parlor, was familiar to her; and the wedding days of Lady L. and Lady G. were as well remembered as if they had been living friends. Amongst her favorite writers, Johnson in prose, Crabbe in verse, and Cowper in both, stood high. It is well that the native good taste of herself and of those with whom she lived, saved her from the snare into which a sister novelist had fallen, of imitating the grandiloquent style of Johnson. She thoroughly enjoyed Crabbe, perhaps on account of a certain resemblance to herself in minute and highly finished detail; and would sometimes say, in jest, that if she ever married at all, she could fancy being Mrs. Crabbe, looking on the author quite as an abstract idea, and ignorant and regardless what manner of man he might be. Scott's poetry gave her great pleasure; she did not live to make much acquaintance with his novels. Only three of them were published before her death;

but it will be seen by the following extract from one of her letters, that she was quite prepared to admit the merits of "Waverley;" and it is remarkable that, living, as she did, far apart from the gossip of the literary world, she should even then have spoken so confidently of his being the author of it: —

"Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. It is not fair. He has fame and profit enough as a poet, and ought not to be taking the bread out of other people's mouths. I do not mean to like 'Waverley,' if I can help it, but I fear I must. I am quite determined, however, not to be pleased with Mrs. ——'s, should I ever meet with it, which I hope I may not. I think I can be stout against anything written by her. I have made up my mind to like no novels really, but Miss Edgeworth's, E.'s, and my own."

It was not, however, what she knew, but what she was, that distinguished her from others. I cannot better describe the fascination which she exercised over children than by quoting the words of two of her nieces. One says: —

"As a very little girl, I was always creeping up to Aunt Jane, and following her whenever I could, in the house and out of it. I might not have remembered this but for the recollection of my mother's telling me privately, that I must not be troublesome to my aunt. Her first charm to children was great sweetness of manner: she seemed to love you, and you loved her in return. This, as well as I can now recollect, was what I felt in my early days, before I was old enough to be amused by her

cleverness. But soon came the delight of her playful talk. She could make everything amusing to a child. Then, as I got older, when cousins came to share the entertainment, she would tell us the most delightful stories, chiefly of Fairyland, and her fairies had all characters of their own. The tale was invented, I am sure, at the moment, and was continued for two or three days if occasion served."

Again: "When staying at Chawton, with two of her other nieces, we often had amusements in which my aunt was very helpful. She was the one to whom we always looked for help. She would furnish us with what we wanted from her wardrobe; and she would be the entertaining visitor in our make-believe house. She amused us in various ways. Once, I remember, in giving a conversation as between myself and my two cousins, supposing we were all grown up, the day after a ball."

Very similar is the testimony of another niece: "Aunt Jane was the general favorite with children; her ways with them being so playful, and her long circumstantial stories so delightful. These were continued from time to time, and were begged for on all possible and impossible occasions; woven, as she proceeded, out of nothing but her own happy talent for invention. Ah, if but one of them could be recovered! And again, as I grew older, when the original seventeen years between our ages seemed to shrink to seven, or to nothing, it comes back to me now how strangely I missed her. It had become so much a habit with me to put by things

in my mind with a reference to her, and to say to myself, I shall keep this for Aunt Jane."

A nephew of hers used to observe that his visits to Chawton, after the death of his Aunt Jane, were always a disappointment to him. From old associations he could not help expecting to be particularly happy in that house; and never till he got there could he realize to himself how all its peculiar charm was gone. It was not only that the chief light in the house was quenched, but that the loss of it had cast a shade over the spirits of the survivors. Enough has been said to show her love for children, and her wonderful power of entertaining them; but her friends of all ages felt her enlivening influence. Her unusually quick sense of the ridiculous led her to play with all the commonplaces of everyday life, whether as regarded persons or things; but she never played with its serious duties or responsibilities, nor did she ever turn individuals into ridicule. With all her neighbors in the village she was on friendly, though not on intimate, terms. She took a kindly interest in all their proceedings, and liked to hear about them. They often served for her amusement; but it was her own nonsense that gave zest to the gossip. She was as far as possible from being censorious or satirical. She never abused them or quizzed them, — that was the word of the day; an ugly word, now obsolete; and the ugly practice which it expressed is much less prevalent now than it was then. The laugh which she occasionally raised was by imagining for her neighbors, as she was equally ready to imagine for her friends or

herself, impossible contingencies, or by relating in prose or verse some trifling anecdote colored to her own fancy, or in writing a fictitious history of what they were supposed to have said or done, which could deceive nobody.

The following specimens may be given of the liveliness of mind which imparted an agreeable flavor both to her correspondence and her conversation: —

On Reading in the Newspapers the Marriage of Mr. Gell, to Miss Gill, of Eastbourne.

At Eastbourne Mr. Gell, From being perfectly well,
Became dreadfully ill, For love of Miss Gill.
So he said, with some sighs, I 'm the slave of your *iis;*
Oh, restore, if you please, By accepting my *ees!*

On the Marriage of a Middle-aged Flirt with a Mr. Wake, whom, it was supposed, she would scarcely have accepted in her Youth.

Maria, good-humored and handsome and tall,
For a husband was at her last stake;
And having in vain danced at many a ball,
Is now happy to *jump at a Wake.*

Jane Austen was successful in everything that she attempted with her fingers. None of us could throw spilikins in so perfect a circle, or take them off with so steady a hand. Her performances with cup and ball were marvellous. The one used at Chawton was an easy one, and she has been known to catch it on the point above an hundred times in succession, till her hand was weary. She sometimes found a resource in that simple game, when unable, from weakness in her eyes, to read or write long together. Happy would the com-

positors for the press be if they had always so legible a manuscript to work from. But the writing was not the only part of her letters which showed superior handiwork. In those days there was an art in folding and sealing. No adhesive envelopes made all easy. Some people's letters always looked loose and untidy; but her paper was sure to take the right folds, and her sealing-wax to drop into the right place. Her needlework, both plain and ornamental, was excellent, and might almost have put a sewing-machine to shame. She was considered especially great in satin stitch. She spent much time in these occupations, and some of her merriest talk was over clothes which she and her companions were making, — sometimes for themselves, and sometimes for the poor. There still remains a curious specimen of her needlework made for a sister-in-law, my mother. In a very small bag is deposited a little rolled-up housewife, furnished with minikin needles and fine thread. In the housewife is a tiny pocket, and in the pocket is enclosed a slip of paper, on which, written as with a crow-quill, are these lines: —

"This little bag, I hope, will prove
To be not vainly made;
For should you thread and needles want,
It will afford you aid.

"And, as we are about to part,
'T will serve another end;
For when you look upon this bag,
You 'll recollect your friend."

It is the kind of article that some benevolent fairy might be supposed to give as a reward to a diligent

little girl. The whole is of flowered silk, and having been never used and carefully preserved, it is as fresh and bright as when it was first made, seventy years ago; and shows that the same hand which painted so exquisitely with the pen could work as delicately with the needle.

I have collected some of the bright qualities which shone, as it were, on the surface of Jane Austen's character, and attracted most notice; but underneath them there lay the strong foundations of sound sense and judgment, rectitude of principle, and delicacy of feeling, qualifying her equally to advise, assist, or amuse. She was, in fact, as ready to comfort the unhappy or to nurse the sick as she was to laugh and jest with the light-hearted. Two of her nieces were grown up, and one of them was married, before she was taken away from them. As their minds became more matured, they were admitted into closer intimacy with her, and learned more of her graver thoughts; they know what a sympathizing friend and judicious adviser they found her to be in many little difficulties and doubts of early womanhood.

I do not venture to speak of her religious principles: that is a subject on which she herself was more inclined to think and act than to talk, and I shall imitate her reserve; satisfied to have shown how much of Christian love and humility abounded in her heart, without presuming to lay bare the roots whence those graces grew. Some little insight, however, into these deeper recesses of the heart must be given, when we come to speak of her death.

CHAPTER VI.

SECLUSION FROM THE LITERARY WORLD — NOTICE FROM THE PRINCE REGENT — CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. CLARKE — SUGGESTIONS TO ALTER HER STYLE OF WRITING.

JANE AUSTEN lived in entire seclusion from the literary world: neither by correspondence nor by personal intercourse was she known to any contemporary authors. It is probable that she never was in company with any person whose talents or whose celebrity equalled her own; so that her powers never could have been sharpened by collision with superior intellects, nor her imagination aided by their casual suggestions. Whatever she produced was a genuine home-made article. Even during the last two or three years of her life, when her works were rising in the estimation of the public, they did not enlarge the circle of her acquaintance. Few of her readers knew even her name, and none knew more of her than her name. I doubt whether it would be possible to mention any other author of note whose personal obscurity was so complete. I can think of none like her, but of many to contrast with her in that respect. Fanny Burney, afterwards Madame D'Arblay, was at an early age petted by Dr. Johnson, and introduced to the wits and scholars of the day at the tables of Mrs. Thrale and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Anna Seward, in her

self-constituted shrine at Lichfield, would have been miserable, had she not trusted that the eyes of all lovers of poetry were devoutly fixed on her. Joanna Baillie and Maria Edgeworth were indeed far from courting publicity; they loved the privacy of their own families, one with her brother and sister in their Hampstead villa, the other in her more distant retreat in Ireland; but fame pursued them, and they were the favorite correspondents of Sir Walter Scott. Crabbe, who was usually buried in a country parish, yet sometimes visited London, and dined at Holland House, and was received as a fellow-poet by Campbell, Moore, and Rogers; and on one memorable occasion he was Scott's guest at Edinburgh, and gazed with wondering eyes on the incongruous pageantry with which George IV. was entertained in that city. Even those great writers who hid themselves amongst lakes and mountains associated with each other, and, though little seen by the world, were so much in its thoughts that a new term, "Lakers," was coined to designate them. The chief part of Charlotte Brontë's life was spent in a wild solitude compared with which Steventon and Chawton might be considered to be in the gay world; and yet she attained to personal distinction which never fell to Jane's lot. When she visited her kind publisher in London, literary men and women were invited purposely to meet her; Thackeray bestowed upon her the honor of his notice ; and once in Willis's Rooms,[1] she had to walk shy and trembling through an avenue of lords and ladies, drawn

[1] See Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Miss Brontë," vol. ii. p. 215.

up for the purpose of gazing at the author of "Jane Eyre." Miss Mitford, too, lived quietly in "Our Village," devoting her time and talents to the benefit of a father scarcely worthy of her; but she did not live there unknown. Her tragedies gave her a name in London. She numbered Milman and Talfourd amongst her correspondents; and her works were a passport to the society of many who would not otherwise have sought her. Hundreds admired Miss Mitford on account of her writings for one who ever connected the idea of Miss Austen with the press. A few years ago, a gentleman visiting Winchester Cathedral desired to be shown Miss Austen's grave. The verger, as he pointed it out, asked, "Pray, sir, can you tell me whether there was anything particular about that lady? so many people want to know where she was buried!" During her life the ignorance of the verger was shared by most people; few knew that "there was anything particular about that lady."

It was not till towards the close of her life, when the last of the works that she saw published was in the press, that she received the only mark of distinction ever bestowed upon her; and that was remarkable for the high quarter whence it emanated rather than for any actual increase of fame that it conferred. It happened thus. In the autumn of 1815 she nursed her brother Henry through a dangerous fever and slow convalescence at his house in Hans Place. He was attended by one of the Prince Regent's physicians. All attempts to keep her name secret had at this time ceased, and though it had never appeared on a title-

page, all who cared to know might easily learn it; and the friendly physician was aware that his patient's nurse was the author of "Pride and Prejudice." Accordingly he informed her one day that the Prince was a great admirer of her novels; that he read them often, and kept a set in every one of his residences; that he himself therefore had thought it right to inform his Royal Highness that Miss Austen was staying in London, and that the Prince had desired Mr. Clarke, the librarian of Carlton House, to wait upon her. The next day Mr. Clarke made his appearance, and invited her to Carlton House, saying that he had the Prince's instructions to show her the library and other apartments, and to pay her every possible attention. The invitation was of course accepted, and during the visit to Carlton House Mr. Clarke declared himself commissioned to say that if Miss Austen had any other novel forthcoming she was at liberty to dedicate it to the Prince. Accordingly such a dedication was immediately prefixed to "Emma," which was at that time in the press.

Mr. Clarke was the brother of Dr. Clarke, the traveller and mineralogist, whose life has been written by Bishop Otter. Jane found in him not only a very courteous gentleman, but also a warm admirer of her talents; though it will be seen by his letters that he did not clearly apprehend the limits of her powers, or the proper field for their exercise. The following correspondence took place between them.

Feeling some apprehension lest she should make a mistake in acting on the verbal permission which

she had received from the Prince, Jane addressed the following letter to Mr. Clarke: —

Nov. 15, 1815.

Sir, — I must take the liberty of asking you a question. Among the many flattering attentions which I received from you at Carlton House on Monday last was the information of my being at liberty to dedicate any future work to His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, without the necessity of any solicitation on my part. Such, at least, I believed to be your words; but as I am very anxious to be quite certain of what was intended, I entreat you to have the goodness to inform me how such a permission is to be understood, and whether it is incumbent on me to show my sense of the honor by inscribing the work now in the press to His Royal Highness; I should be equally concerned to appear either presumptuous or ungrateful.

The following gracious answer was returned by Mr. Clarke, together with a suggestion which must have been received with some surprise: —

Carlton House, Nov. 16, 1815.

Dear Madam, — It is certainly not *incumbent* on you to dedicate your work now in the press to His Royal Highness; but if you wish to do the Regent that honor either now or at any future period I am happy to send you that permission, which need not require any more trouble or solicitation on your part.

Your late works, Madam, and in particular

"Mansfield Park," reflect the highest honor on your genius and your principles. In every new work your mind seems to increase its energy and power of discrimination. The Regent has read and admired all your publications.

Accept my best thanks for the pleasure your volumes have given me. In the perusal of them I felt a great inclination to write and say so. And I also, dear Madam, wished to be allowed to ask you to delineate in some future work the habits of life, and character, and enthusiasm of a clergyman who should pass his time between the metropolis and the country, who should be something like Beattie's Minstrel, —

> Silent when glad, affectionate tho' shy,
> And in his looks was most demurely sad;
> And now he laughed aloud, yet none knew why.

Neither Goldsmith, nor La Fontaine in his "Tableau de Famille," have in my mind quite delineated an English clergyman, at least of the present day, fond of and entirely engaged in literature, no man's enemy but his own. Pray, dear Madam, think of these things.

Believe me at all times with sincerity and respect,

Your faithful and obliged servant,

J. S. Clarke, Librarian.

The following letter, written in reply, will show how unequal the author of "Pride and Prejudice" felt herself to delineating an enthusiastic clergyman of the present day, who should resemble Beattie's Minstrel: —

Dec. 11.

DEAR SIR, — My "Emma" is now so near publication that I feel it right to assure you of my not having forgotten your kind recommendation of an early copy for Carlton House, and that I have Mr. Murray's promise of its being sent to His Royal Highness, under cover to you, three days previous to the work being really out. I must make use of this opportunity to thank you, dear Sir, for the very high praise you bestow on my other novels. I am too vain to wish to convince you that you have praised them beyond their merits. My greatest anxiety at present is that this fourth work should not disgrace what was good in the others. But on this point I will do myself the justice to declare that, whatever may be my wishes for its success, I am strongly haunted with the idea that to those readers who have preferred "Pride and Prejudice" it will appear inferior in wit, and to those who have preferred "Mansfield Park" inferior in good sense. Such as it is, however, I hope you will do me the favor of accepting a copy. Mr. Murray will have directions for sending one. I am quite honored by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of Nov. 16th. But I assure you I am not. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman who,

like me, knows only her own mother tongue, and has read little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful humbl Sert,

JANE AUSTEN.[1]

Mr. Clarke, however, was not to be discouraged from proposing another subject. He had recently been appointed chaplain and private English secretary to Prince Leopold, who was then about to be united to the Princess Charlotte; and when he again wrote to express the gracious thanks of the Prince Regent for the copy of "Emma" which had been presented, he suggests that "an historical romance illustrative of the august House of Cobourg would just now be very interesting," and might very properly be dedicated to Prince Leopold. This was much as if Sir William Ross had been set to paint a great battle-piece; and it is amusing to see with what grave civility she declined a

[1] It was her pleasure to boast of greater ignorance than she had any just claim to. She knew more than her mother tongue, for she knew a good deal of French and a little of Italian.

proposal which must have struck her as ludicrous, in the following letter : —

My dear Sir, — I am honored by the Prince's thanks, and very much obliged to yourself for the kind manner in which you mention the work. I have also to acknowledge a former letter forwarded to me from Hans Place. I assure you I felt very grateful for the friendly tenor of it, and hope my silence will have been considered, as it was truly meant, to proceed only from an unwillingness to tax your time with idle thanks. Under every interesting circumstance which your own talents and literary labors have placed you in, or the favor of the Regent bestowed, you have my best wishes. Your recent appointments, I hope, are a step to something still better. In my opinion, the service of a court can hardly be too well paid, for immense must be the sacrifice of time and feeling required by it.

You are very kind in your hints as to the sort of composition which might recommend me at present, and I am fully sensible that an historical romance, founded on the House of Saxe Cobourg, might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages as I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had

finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your very much obliged and sincere friend,

J. AUSTEN.

CHAWTON, near ALTON, April 1, 1816.

Mr. Clarke should have recollected the warning of the wise man, "Force not the course of the river." If you divert it from the channel in which nature taught it to flow, and force it into one arbitrarily cut by yourself, you will lose its grace and beauty.

> But when his free course is not hindered,
> He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
> He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;
> And so by many winding nooks he strays
> With willing sport.

All writers of fiction who have genius strong enough to work out a course of their own resist every attempt to interfere with its direction. No two writers could be more unlike each other than Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë, — so much so that the latter was unable to understand why the former was admired, and confessed that she herself "should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses;" but each writer equally resisted interference with her own natural style of composition. Miss Brontë, in reply to a friendly critic, who had

warned her against being too melodramatic, and had ventured to propose Miss Austen's works to her as a study, writes thus: —

"Whenever I do write another book, I think I will have nothing of what you call 'melodrama.' I think so, but I am not sure. I think, too, I will endeavor to follow the counsel which shines out of Miss Austen's 'mild eyes,' to finish more, and be more subdued; but neither am I sure of that. When authors write best, or at least when they write most fluently, an influence seems to waken in them which becomes their master, — which will have its way, — putting out of view all behests but its own, dictating certain words, and insisting on their being used, whether vehement or measured in their nature, new-moulding characters, giving unthought-of turns to incidents, rejecting carefully elaborated old ideas, and suddenly creating and adopting new ones. Is it not so? And should we try to counteract this influence? Can we indeed counteract it?"[1]

The playful raillery with which the one parries an attack on her liberty, and the vehement eloquence of the other in pleading the same cause and maintaining the independence of genius, are very characteristic of the minds of the respective writers.

The suggestions which Jane received as to the sort of story that she ought to write were, however, an amusement to her, though they were not likely to prove useful; and she has left amongst her papers one entitled "Plan of a novel accord-

[1] Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Miss Brontë," vol. ii. p. 53.

ing to hints from various quarters." The names of some of those advisers are written on the margin of the manuscript, opposite to their respective suggestions.

"Heroine to be the daughter of a clergyman, who after having lived much in the world had retired from it, and settled on a curacy with a very small fortune of his own. The most excellent man that can be imagined, perfect in character, temper, and manner, without the smallest drawback or peculiarity to prevent his being the most delightful companion to his daughter from one year's end to the other. Heroine faultless in character, beautiful in person, and possessing every possible accomplishment. Book to open with father and daughter conversing in long speeches, elegant language, and a tone of high serious sentiment. The father induced, at his daughter's earnest request, to relate to her the past events of his life. Narrative to reach through the greater part of the first volume; as, besides all the circumstances of his attachment to her mother, and their marriage, it will comprehend his going to sea as chaplain to a distinguished naval character about the court; and his going afterwards to court himself, which involved him in many interesting situations, concluding with his opinion of the benefits of tithes being done away with. . . . From this outset the story will proceed, and contain a striking variety of adventures. Father an exemplary parish priest, and devoted to literature; but heroine and father never above a fortnight in one place, — he being

driven from his curacy by the vile arts of some totally unprincipled and heartless young man, desperately in love with the heroine, and pursuing her with unrelenting passion. No sooner settled in one country of Europe than they are compelled to quit it and retire to another, always making new acquaintance, and always obliged to leave them. This will of course exhibit a wide variety of character. The scene will be forever shifting from one set of people to another, but there will be no mixture; all the good will be unexceptionable in every respect. There will be no foibles or weaknesses but with the wicked, who will be completely depraved and infamous, hardly a resemblance of humanity left in them. Early in her career the heroine must meet with the hero: all perfection, of course, and only prevented from paying his addresses to her by some excess of refinement. Wherever she goes, somebody falls in love with her, and she receives repeated offers of marriage, which she refers wholly to her father, exceedingly angry that he should not be the first applied to. Often carried away by the anti-hero, but rescued either by her father or the hero. Often reduced to support herself and her father by her talents, and work for her bread; continually cheated, and defrauded of her hire; worn down to a skeleton, and now and then starved to death. At last, hunted out of civilized society, denied the poor shelter of the humblest cottage, they are compelled to retreat into Kamtschatka, where the poor father, quite worn down, finding his end approaching, throws himself on the ground, and

after four or five hours of tender advice and parental admonition to his miserable child, expires in a fine burst of literary enthusiasm, intermingled with invectives against the holders of tithes. Heroine inconsolable for some time, but afterwards crawls back towards her former country, having at least twenty narrow escapes of falling into the hands of anti-hero; and at last, in the very nick of time, turning a corner to avoid him, runs into the arms of the hero himself, who, having just shaken off the scruples which fettered him before, was at the very moment setting off in pursuit of her. The tenderest and completest *éclaircissement* takes place, and they are happily united. Throughout the whole work heroine to be in the most elegant society, and living in high style."

Since the first publication of this memoir, Mr. Murray of Albemarle Street has very kindly sent to me copies of the following letters, which his father received from Jane Austen, when engaged in the publication of "Emma." The increasing cordiality of the letters shows that the author felt that her interests were duly cared for, and was glad to find herself in the hands of a publisher whom she could consider as a friend.

Her brother had addressed to Mr. Murray a strong complaint of the tardiness of a printer: —

23 Hans Place, Thursday, November 23 (1815).

Sir, — My brother's note last Monday has been so fruitless that I am afraid there can be but little chance of my writing to any good effect;

but yet I am so very much disappointed and vexed by the delays of the printers, that I cannot help begging to know whether there is no hope of their being quickened. Instead of the work being ready by the end of the present month, it will hardly, at the rate we now proceed, be finished by the end of the next; and as I expect to leave London early in December, it is of consequence that no more time should be lost. Is it likely that the printers will be influenced to greater despatch and punctuality by knowing that the work is to be dedicated, by permission, to the Prince Regent? If you can make that circumstance operate, I shall be very glad. My brother returns "Waterloo" with many thanks for the loan of it. We have heard much of Scott's account of Paris.[1] If it be not incompatible with other arrangements, would you favor us with it, supposing you have any set already opened? You may depend upon its being in careful hands.

I remain, Sir, your ob^{t} humble Se^{t},

J. Austen.

Hans Place, December 11 (1815).

Dear Sir, — As I find that "Emma" is advertised for publication as early as Saturday next, I think it best to lose no time in settling all that remains to be settled on the subject, and adopt this method as involving the smallest tax on your time.

In the first place, I beg you to understand

[1] This must have been "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk."

that I leave the terms on which the trade should be supplied with the work entirely to your judgment, entreating you to be guided in every such arrangement by your own experience of what is most likely to clear off the edition rapidly. I shall be satisfied with whatever you feel to be best. The titlepage must be "Emma, dedicated by permission to H. R. H. the Prince Regent." And it is my particular wish that one set should be completed and sent to H. R. H. two or three days before the work is generally public. It should be sent under cover to the Rev. J. S. Clarke, Librarian, Carlton House. I shall subjoin a list of those persons to whom I must trouble you to forward also a set each, when the work is out; all unbound, with "From the Authoress" in the first page.

I return you, with very many thanks, the books you have so obligingly supplied me with. I am very sensible, I assure you, of the attention you have paid to my convenience and amusement. I return also "Mansfield Park," as ready for a second edition, I believe, as I can make it. I am in Hans Place till the 16th. From that day inclusive, my direction will be Chawton, Alton, Hants.

I remain, dear Sir,

Y^r^ faithful humb. Serv^t^,

J. Austen.

I wish you would have the goodness to send a line by the bearer, stating *the day* on which the set will be ready for the Prince Regent.

Hans Place, December 11, 1815.

Dear Sir, — I am much obliged by yours, and very happy to feel everything arranged to our mutual satisfaction. As to my direction about the titlepage, it was arising from my ignorance only, and from my having never noticed the proper place for a dedication. I thank you for putting me right. Any deviation from what is usually done in such cases is the last thing I should wish for. I feel happy in having a friend to save me from the ill effect of my own blunder.

Yours, dear Sir, etc.,

J. Austen.

Chawton, April 1, 1816.

Dear Sir, — I return you the "Quarterly Review" with many thanks. The Authoress of "Emma" has no reason, I think, to complain of her treatment in it, except in the total omission of "Mansfield Park." I cannot but be sorry that so clever a man as the Reviewer of "Emma" should consider it as unworthy of being noticed. You will be pleased to hear that I have received the Prince's thanks for the *handsome* copy I sent him of "Emma." Whatever he may think of *my* share of the work, yours seems to have been quite right.

In consequence of the late event in Henrietta Street, I must request that if you should at any time have anything to communicate by letter, you will be so good as to write by the post, directing to me (Miss J. Austen), Chawton, near Alton; and that for anything of a larger bulk, you will

add to the same direction, by *Collier's Southampton coach.*

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

J. Austen.

About the same time the following letters passed between the Countess of Morley and the writer of "Emma." I do not know whether they were personally acquainted with each other, nor in what this interchange of civilities originated: —

The Countess of Morley to Miss J. Austen.

Saltram, December 27 (1815).

Madam, — I have been most anxiously waiting for an introduction to "Emma," and am infinitely obliged to you for your kind recollection of me, which will procure me the pleasure of her acquaintance some days sooner than I should otherwise have had it. I am already become intimate with the Woodhouse family, and feel that they will not amuse and interest me less than the Bennets, Bertrams, Norrises, and all their admirable predecessors. I can give them no higher praise.

I am, Madam, your much obliged

F. Morley.

Miss J. Austen to the Countess of Morley.

Madam, — Accept my thanks for the honor of your note, and for your kind disposition in favor of "Emma." In my present state of doubt as to her reception in the world, it is particularly grati-

fying to me to receive so early an assurance of your Ladyship's approbation. It encourages me to depend on the same share of general good opinion which "Emma's" predecessors have experienced, and to believe that I have not yet, as almost every writer of fancy does sooner or later, overwritten myself.

I am, Madam,

Your obliged and faithful Serv^t^,

J. Austen.

December 31, 1815.

CHAPTER VII.

Slow Growth of her Fame — Ill Success of first Attempts at Publication — Two Reviews of her Works contrasted.

Seldom has any literary reputation been of such slow growth as that of Jane Austen. Readers of the present day know the rank that is generally assigned to her. They have been told by Archbishop Whately, in his review of her works, and by Lord Macaulay, in his review of Madame D'Arblay's, the reason why the highest place is to be awarded to Jane Austen, as a truthful drawer of character, and why she is to be classed with those who have approached nearest, in that respect, to the great master Shakspeare. They see her safely placed, by such authorities, in her niche, not indeed amongst the highest orders of genius, but in one confessedly her own, in our British temple of literary fame; and it may be difficult to make them believe how coldly her works were at first received, and how few readers had any appreciation of their peculiar merits. Sometimes a friend or neighbor, who chanced to know of our connection with the author, would condescend to speak with moderate approbation of "Sense and Sensibility" or "Pride and Prejudice;" but if they had known that we, in our secret thoughts,

classed her with Madame D'Arblay or Miss Edgeworth, or even with some other novel-writers of the day whose names are now scarcely remembered, they would have considered it an amusing instance of family conceit. To the multitude her works appeared tame and commonplace,[1] poor in coloring, and sadly deficient in incident and interest. It is true that we were sometimes cheered by hearing that a different verdict had been pronounced by more competent judges: we were told how some great statesman or distinguished poet held these works in high estimation; we had the satisfaction of believing that they were most admired by the best judges, and comforted ourselves with Horace's "satis est Equitem mihi plaudere." So much was this the case, that one of the ablest men of my acquaintance[2] said, in that kind of jest which has much earnest in it, that he had established it in his own mind as a new test of ability, whether people could or could not appreciate Miss Austen's merits.

But though such golden opinions were now and

[1] A greater genius than my aunt shared with her the imputation of being *commonplace*. Lockhart, speaking of the low estimation in which Scott's conversational powers were held in the literary and scientific society of Edinburgh, says: "I think the epithet most in vogue concerning it was 'commonplace.'" He adds, however, that one of the most eminent of that society was of a different opinion, "who, when some glib youth chanced to echo in his hearing the consolatory tenet of local mediocrity, answered quietly, 'I have the misfortune to think differently from you. In my humble opinion Walter Scott's *sense* is a still more wonderful thing than his genius.'" — LOCKHART'S *Life of Scott*, vol. iv. chap. v.

[2] The late Mr. R. H. Cheney.

then gathered in, yet the wide field of public taste yielded no adequate return either in praise or profit. Her reward was not to be the quick return of the cornfield, but the slow growth of the tree which is to endure to another generation. Her first attempts at publication were very discouraging. In November, 1797, her father wrote the following letter to Mr. Cadell: —

Sir, — I have in my possession a manuscript novel, comprising 3 vols., about the length of Miss Burney's "Evelina." As I am well aware of what consequence it is that a work of this sort sh^d^ make its first appearance under a respectable name, I apply to you. I shall be much obliged therefore if you will inform me whether you choose to be concerned in it, what will be the expense of publishing it at the author's risk, and what you will venture to advance for the property of it, if on perusal it is approved of. Should you give any encouragement, I will send you the work.

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,
George Austen.

Steventon, near Overton, Hants,
1st Nov., 1797.

This proposal was declined by return of post! The work thus summarily rejected must have been "Pride and Prejudice."

The fate of "Northanger Abbey" was still more humiliating. It was sold, in 1803, to a publisher in Bath, for ten pounds; but it found so little favor in his eyes that he chose to abide by his

first loss rather than risk further expense by publishing such a work. It seems to have lain for many years unnoticed in his drawers; somewhat as the first chapters of "Waverley" lurked forgotten amongst the old fishing-tackle in Scott's cabinet.

Tilneys, Thorpes, and Morlands consigned apparently to eternal oblivion! But when four novels of steadily increasing success had given the writer some confidence in herself, she wished to recover the copyright of this early work. One of her brothers undertook the negotiation. He found the purchaser very willing to receive back his money, and to resign all claim to the copyright. When the bargain was concluded and the money paid, but not till then, the negotiator had the satisfaction of informing him that the work which had been so lightly esteemed was by the author of "Pride and Prejudice." I do not think that she was herself much mortified by the want of early success. She wrote for her own amusement. Money, though acceptable, was not necessary for the moderate expenses of her quiet home. Above all, she was blessed with a cheerful, contented disposition and an humble mind; and so lowly did she esteem her own claims, that when she received 150*l.* from the sale of "Sense and Sensibility," she considered it a prodigious recompense for that which had cost her nothing. It cannot be supposed, however, that she was altogether insensible to the superiority of her own workmanship over that of some contemporaries who were then enjoying a brief popularity. Indeed a few touches in the following extracts from two of her letters show that

she was as quick-sighted to absurdities in composition as to those in living persons.

"Mr. C.'s opinion is gone down in my list; but as my paper relates only to 'Mansfield Park,' I may fortunately excuse myself from entering Mr. D.'s. I will redeem my credit with him by writing a close imitation of 'Self-Control,' as soon as I can. I will improve upon it. My heroine shall not only be wafted down an American river in a boat by herself; she shall cross the Atlantic in the same way, and never stop till she reaches Gravesend.

"We have got 'Rosanne' in our Society, and find it much as you describe it; very good and clever, but tedious. Mrs. Hawkins' great excellence is on serious subjects. There are some very delightful conversations and reflections on religion: but on lighter topics I think she falls into many absurdities; and, as to love, her heroine has very comical feelings. There are a thousand improbabilities in the story. Do you remember the two Miss Ormsdens introduced just at last? Very flat and unnatural. Mad^elle^ Cossart is rather my passion."

Two notices of her works appeared in the "Quarterly Review," — one in October, 1815, and another, more than three years after her death, in January, 1821. The latter article is known to have been from the pen of Whately, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin.[1] They differ much from

[1] Lockhart had supposed that this article had been written by Scott, because it exactly accorded with the opinions which Scott had often been heard to express, but he learned after-

each other in the degree of praise which they award, and I think also it may be said, in the ability with which they are written. The first bestows some approval, but the other expresses the warmest admiration. One can scarcely be satisfied with the critical acumen of the former writer, who, in treating of "Sense and Sensibility," takes no notice whatever of the vigor with which many of the characters are drawn, but declares that "the interest and merit of the piece depends altogether upon the behavior of the elder sister!" Nor is he fair when, in "Pride and Prejudice," he represents Elizabeth's change of sentiments towards Darcy as caused by the sight of his house and grounds. But the chief discrepancy between the two reviewers is to be found in their appreciation of the commonplace and silly characters to be found in these novels. On this point the difference almost amounts to a contradiction, such as one sometimes sees drawn up in parallel columns, when it is desired to convict some writer or some statesman of inconsistency. The Reviewer in 1815 says: "The faults of these works arise from the minute detail which the author's plan comprehends. Characters of folly or simplicity, such as those of old Woodhouse and Miss Bates, are ridiculous when first presented, but if too often brought

wards that it had been written by Whately; and Lockhart, who became the Editor of the Quarterly, must have had the means of knowing the truth. (See Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott," vol. v. p. 158.) I remember that, at the time when the review came out, it was reported in Oxford that Whately had written the article at the request of the lady whom he afterwards married.

forward, or too long dwelt on, their prosing is apt to become as tiresome in fiction as in real society." The Reviewer in 1821, on the contrary, singles out the fools as especial instances of the writer's abilities, and declares that in this respect she shows a regard to character hardly exceeded by Shakspeare himself. These are his words: "Like him (Shakspeare) she shows as admirable a discrimination in the character of fools as of people of sense, a merit which is far from common. To invent indeed a conversation full of wisdom or of wit requires that the writer should himself possess ability; but the converse does not hold good, it is no fool that can describe fools well; and many who have succeeded pretty well in painting superior characters have failed in giving individuality to those weaker ones which it is necessary to introduce in order to give a faithful representation of real life: they exhibit to us mere folly in the abstract, forgetting that to the eye of the skilful naturalist the insects on a leaf present as wide differences as exist between the lion and the elephant. Slender, and Shallow, and Aguecheek, as Shakspeare has painted them, though equally fools, resemble one another no more than Richard, and Macbeth, and Julius Cæsar; and Miss Austen's [1] Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Rushworth, and Miss Bates are no more alike than her Darcy, Knightley, and Edmund Bertram. Some have complained indeed of finding her fools too much like nature, and consequently tiresome. There is no disputing about

[1] In transcribing this passage I have taken the liberty so far to correct it as to spell her name properly with an "e."

tastes; all we can say is, that such critics must (whatever deference they may outwardly pay to received opinions) find the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' and 'Twelfth Night' very tiresome; and that those who look with pleasure at Wilkie's picture, or those of the Dutch school, must admit that excellence of imitation may confer attraction on that which would be insipid or disagreeable in the reality. Her minuteness of detail has also been found fault with; but even where it produces, at the time, a degree of tediousness, we know not whether that can justly be reckoned a blemish which is absolutely essential to a very high excellence. Now it is absolutely impossible, without this, to produce that thorough acquaintance with the characters which is necessary to make the reader heartily interested in them. Let any one cut out from the 'Iliad' or from Shakspeare's plays everything (we are far from saying that either might not lose some parts with advantage, but let him reject everything) which is absolutely devoid of importance and interest in itself; and he will find that what is left will have lost more than half its charms. We are convinced that some writers have diminished the effect of their works by being scrupulous to admit nothing into them which had not some absolute and independent merit. They have acted like those who strip off the leaves of a fruit tree, as being of themselves good for nothing, with the view of securing more nourishment to the fruit, which in fact cannot attain its full maturity and flavor without them."

The world, I think, has endorsed the opinion of

the later writer; but it would not be fair to set down the discrepancy between the two entirely to the discredit of the former. The fact is that, in the course of the intervening five years, these works had been read and reread by many leaders in the literary world. The public taste was forming itself all this time, and "grew by what it fed on." These novels belong to a class which gain rather than lose by frequent perusals, and it is probable that each Reviewer represented fairly enough the prevailing opinions of readers in the year when each wrote.

Since that time the testimonies in favor of Jane Austen's works have been continual and almost unanimous. They are frequently referred to as models: nor have they lost their first distinction of being especially acceptable to minds of the highest order. I shall indulge myself by collecting into the next chapter instances of the homage paid to her by such persons.

CHAPTER VIII.

Opinions expressed by eminent Persons — Opinions of Others of less Eminence — Opinion of American Readers.

Into this list of the admirers of my aunt's works I admit those only whose eminence will be universally acknowledged. No doubt the number might have been increased.

Southey, in a letter to Sir Egerton Brydges, says: "You mention Miss Austen. Her novels are more true to nature, and have, for my sympathies, passages of finer feeling than any others of this age. She was a person of whom I have heard so well and think so highly that I regret not having had an opportunity of testifying to her the respect which I felt for her."

It may be observed that Southey had probably heard from his own family connections of the charm of her private character. A friend of hers, the daughter of Mr. Bigge Wither, of Manydown Park near Basingstoke, was married to Southey's uncle, the Rev. Herbert Hill, who had been useful to his nephew in many ways, and especially in supplying him with the means of attaining his extensive knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese literature. Mr. Hill had been Chaplain to the British Factory at Lisbon, where Southey visited him and had the use of a library in those languages which his uncle had collected. Southey himself

continually mentions his Uncle Hill in terms of respect and gratitude.

S. T. Coleridge would sometimes burst out into high encomiums of Miss Austen's novels as being, "in their way, perfectly genuine and individual productions."

I remember Miss Mitford's saying to me: "I would almost cut off one of my hands, if it would enable me to write like your aunt with the other."

The biographer of Sir J. Mackintosh says: "Something recalled to his mind the traits of character which are so delicately touched in Miss Austen's novels. . . . He said that there was genius in sketching out that new kind of novel. . . . He was vexed for the credit of the 'Edinburgh Review' that it had left her unnoticed.[1] . . . 'The Quarterly' had done her more justice. . . . It was impossible for a foreigner to understand fully the merit of her works. Madame de Staël, to whom he had recommended one of her novels, found no interest in it; and in her note to him in reply said it was 'vulgaire;' and yet, he said, nothing could be more true than what he wrote in answer: 'There is no book which that word would so little suit.' . . . Every village could furnish matter for a novel to Miss Austen. She did not need the common materials for a novel, strong emotions or strong incidents."[2]

It was not, however, quite impossible for a for-

[1] Incidentally she had received high praise in Lord Macaulay's Review of Madame D'Arblay's Works in the "Edinburgh."

[2] Life of Sir J. Mackintosh, vol. ii. p. 472.

eigner to appreciate these works; for Mons. Guizot writes thus: "I am a great novel-reader, but I seldom read German or French novels. The characters are too artificial. My delight is to read English novels, particularly those written by women. 'C'est toute une école de morale.' Miss Austen, Miss Ferrier, etc., form a school which in the excellence and profusion of its productions resembles the cloud of dramatic poets of the great Athenian age."

In the "Keepsake" of 1825 the following lines appeared, written by Lord Morpeth, afterwards seventh Earl of Carlisle, and Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, accompanying an illustration of a lady reading a novel: —

Beats thy quick pulse o'er Inchbald's thrilling leaf,
Brunton's high moral, Opie's deep-wrought grief?
Has the mild chaperon claimed thy yielding heart,
Carroll's dark page, Trevelyan's gentle art?
Or is it thou, all-perfect Austen? Here
Let one poor wreath adorn thy early bier,
That scarce allowed thy modest youth to claim
Its living portion of thy certain fame!
Oh! Mrs. Bennet! Mrs. Norris too!
While memory survives we 'll dream of you.
And Mr. Woodhouse, whose abstemious lip
Must thin, but not too thin, his gruel sip.
Miss Bates, our idol, though the village bore;
And Mrs. Elton, ardent to explore.
While the dear style flows on without pretence,
With unstained purity, and unmatched sense:
Or, if a sister e'er approached the throne,
She called the rich "inheritance" her own.

The admiration felt by Lord Macaulay would probably have taken a very practical form, if his

life had been prolonged. I have the authority of his sister, Lady Trevelyan, for stating that he had intended to undertake the task upon which I have ventured. He purposed to write a memoir of Miss Austen, with criticisms on her works, to prefix it to a new edition of her novels, and from the proceeds of the sale to erect a monument to her memory in Winchester Cathedral. Oh that such an idea had been realized! That portion of the plan in which Lord Macaulay's success would have been most certain might have been almost sufficient for his object. A memoir written by him would have been a monument.

I am kindly permitted by Sir Henry Holland to give the following quotation from his printed but unpublished recollections of his past life: —

"I have the picture still before me of Lord Holland lying on his bed, when attacked with gout, his admirable sister, Miss Fox, beside him reading aloud, as she always did on these occasions, some one of Miss Austen's novels, of which he was never wearied. I well recollect the time when these charming novels, almost unique in their style of humor, burst suddenly on the world. It was sad that their writer did not live to witness the growth of her fame."

My brother-in-law, Sir Denis Le Marchant, has supplied me with the following anecdotes from his own recollections: —

"When I was a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, Mr. Whewell, then a Fellow and afterwards Master of the College, often spoke to me

with admiration of Miss Austen's novels. On one occasion I said that I had found 'Persuasion' rather dull. He quite fired up in defence of it, insisting that it was the most beautiful of her works. This accomplished philosopher was deeply versed in works of fiction. I recollect his writing to me from Caernarvon, where he had the charge of some pupils, that he was weary of his stay, for he had read the circulating library twice through.

"During a visit I paid to Lord Lansdowne, at Bowood, in 1846, one of Miss Austen's novels became the subject of conversation and of praise, especially from Lord Lansdowne, who observed that one of the circumstances of his life which he looked back upon with vexation was that Miss Austen should once have been living some weeks in his neighborhood without his knowing it.

"I have heard Sydney Smith, more than once, dwell with eloquence on the merits of Miss Austen's novels. He told me he should have enjoyed giving her the pleasure of reading her praises in the 'Edinburgh Review.' 'Fanny Price' was one of his prime favorites."

I close this list of testimonies, this long "Catena Patrum," with the remarkable words of Sir Walter Scott, taken from his diary for March 14, 1826:[1] "Read again, for the third time at least, Miss Austen's finely written novel of 'Pride and Prejudice.' That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most

[1] Lockhart's "Life of Scott," vol. vi. chap. vii.

wonderful I ever met with. The big Bow-Wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!" The well-worn condition of Scott's own copy of these works attests that they were much read in his family. When I visited Abbotsford, a few years after Scott's death, I was permitted, as an unusual favor, to take one of these volumes in my hands. One cannot suppress the wish that she had lived to know what such men thought of her powers, and how gladly they would have cultivated a personal acquaintance with her. I do not think that it would at all have impaired the modest simplicity of her character; or that we should have lost our own dear "Aunt Jane" in the blaze of literary fame.

It may be amusing to contrast with these testimonies from the great, the opinions expressed by other readers of more ordinary intellect. The author herself has left a list of criticisms which it had been her amusement to collect, through means of her friends. This list contains much of warm-hearted sympathizing praise, interspersed with some opinions which may be considered surprising.

One lady could say nothing better of "Mansfield Park" than that it was "a mere novel."

Another owned that she thought "Sense and Sensibility" and "Pride and Prejudice" downright nonsense; but expected to like "Mansfield

Park" better, and having finished the first volume, hoped that she had got through the worst.

Another did not like "Mansfield Park." Nothing interesting in the characters. Language poor.

One gentleman read the first and last chapters of "Emma," but did not look at the rest, because he had been told that it was not interesting.

The opinions of another gentleman about "Emma" were so bad that they could not be reported to the author.

"Quot homines, tot sententiæ."

Thirty-five years after her death there came also a voice of praise from across the Atlantic. In 1852 the following letter was received by her brother, Sir Francis Austen: —

Boston, Massachusetts, U. S. A.,
6th Jan., 1852.

Since high critical authority has pronounced the delineations of character in the works of Jane Austen second only to those of Shakspeare, transatlantic admiration appears superfluous; yet it may not be uninteresting to her family to receive an assurance that the influence of her genius is extensively recognized in the American Republic, even by the highest judicial authorities. The late Mr. Chief Justice Marshall, of the Supreme Court of the United States, and his associate Mr. Justice Story, highly estimated and admired Miss Austen, and to them we owe our introduction to her society. For many years her talents have brightened our daily path, and her name and those of her characters are familiar to us as "household

words." We have long wished to express to some of her family the sentiments of gratitude and affection she has inspired, and request more information relative to her life than is given in the brief memoir prefixed to her works.

Having accidentally heard that a brother of Jane Austen held a high rank in the British Navy, we have obtained his address from our friend Admiral Wormley, now resident in Boston, and we trust this expression of our feeling will be received by her relations with the kindness and urbanity characteristic of Admirals of her creation. Sir Francis Austen, or one of his family, would confer a great favor by complying with our request. The autograph of his sister, or a few lines in her handwriting, would be placed among our chief treasures.

The family who delight in the companionship of Jane Austen, and who present this petition, are of English origin. Their ancestor held a high rank among the first emigrants to New England, and his name and character have been ably represented by his descendants in various public stations of trust and responsibility to the present time in the colony and State of Massachusetts. A letter addressed to Miss Quincy, care of the Hon^{ble} Josiah Quincy, Boston, Massachusetts, would reach its destination.

Sir Francis Austen returned a suitable reply to this application; and sent a long letter of his sister's, which, no doubt, still occupies the place of honor promised by the Quincy family.

CHAPTER IX.

Observations on the Novels.

It is not the object of these memoirs to attempt a criticism on Jane Austen's novels. Those particulars only have been noticed which could be illustrated by the circumstances of her own life; but I now desire to offer a few observations on them, and especially on one point, on which my age renders me a competent witness, — the fidelity with which they represent the opinions and manners of the class of society in which the author lived, early in this century. They do this the more faithfully on account of the very deficiency with which they have been sometimes charged, — namely, that they make no attempt to raise the standard of human life, but merely represent it as it was. They certainly were not written to support any theory or inculcate any particular moral, except indeed the great moral which is to be equally gathered from an observation of the course of actual life, — namely, the superiority of high over low principles, and of greatness over littleness of mind. These writings are like photographs, in which no feature is softened; no ideal expression is introduced, all is the unadorned reflection of the natural object; and the value of such a faithful likeness must increase as time gradually works more and

more changes in the face of society itself. A remarkable instance of this is to be found in her portraiture of the clergy. She was the daughter and the sister of clergymen, who certainly were not low specimens of their order, and she has chosen three of her heroes from that profession; but no one in these days can think that either Edmund Bertram or Henry Tilney had adequate ideas of the duties of a parish minister. Such, however, were the opinions and practice then prevalent among respectable and conscientious clergymen before their minds had been stirred, first by the Evangelical and afterwards by the High-Church movement which this century has witnessed. The country may be congratulated which, on looking back to such a fixed landmark, can find that it has been advancing instead of receding from it.

The long interval that elapsed between the completion of "Northanger Abbey" in 1798 and the commencement of "Mansfield Park" in 1811 may sufficiently account for any difference of style which may be perceived between her three earlier and her three later productions. If the former showed quite as much originality and genius, they may perhaps be thought to have less of the faultless finish and high polish which distinguish the latter. The characters of the John Dashwoods, Mr. Collins, and the Thorpes stand out from the canvas with a vigor and originality which cannot be surpassed; but I think that in her last three works are to be found a greater refinement of taste, a more nice sense of propriety, and a deeper in-

sight into the delicate anatomy of the human heart, marking the difference between the brilliant girl and the mature woman. Far from being one of those who have over-written themselves, it may be affirmed that her fame would have stood on a narrower and less firm basis if she had not lived to resume her pen at Chawton.

Some persons have surmised that she took her characters from individuals with whom she had been acquainted. They were so lifelike that it was assumed that they must once have lived, and have been transferred bodily, as it were, into her pages. But surely such a supposition betrays an ignorance of the high prerogative of genius to create out of its own resources imaginary characters, who shall be true to nature and consistent in themselves. Perhaps, however, the distinction between keeping true to nature and servilely copying any one specimen of it is not always clearly apprehended. It is indeed true, both of the writer and of the painter, that he can use only such lineaments as exist, and as he has observed to exist, in living objects; otherwise he would produce monsters instead of human beings; but in both it is the office of high art to mould these features into new combinations, and to place them in the attitudes and impart to them the expressions which may suit the purposes of the artist; so that they are nature, but not exactly the same nature which had come before his eyes; just as honey can be obtained only from the natural flowers which the bee has sucked; yet it is not a reproduction of the odor or flavor of any particular flower, but be-

comes something different when it has gone through the process of transformation which that little insect is able to effect. Hence, in the case of painters, arises the superiority of original compositions over portrait-painting. Reynolds was exercising a higher faculty when he designed Comedy and Tragedy contending for Garrick, than when he merely took a likeness of that actor. The same difference exists in writings between the original conceptions of Shakspeare and some other creative geniuses, and such full-length likenesses of individual persons, "The Talking Gentleman" for instance, as are admirably drawn by Miss Mitford. Jane Austen's powers, whatever may be the degree in which she possessed them, were certainly of that higher order. She did not copy individuals, but she invested her own creations with individuality of character. A reviewer in the "Quarterly" speaks of an acquaintance who, ever since the publication of "Pride and Prejudice," had been called by his friends Mr. Bennet, but the author did not know him. Her own relations never recognized any individual in her characters; and I can call to mind several of her acquaintance, whose peculiarities were very tempting and easy to be caricatured, of whom there are no traces in her pages. She herself, when questioned on the subject by a friend, expressed a dread of what she called such an "invasion of social proprieties." She said that she thought it quite fair to note peculiarities and weaknesses, but that it was her desire to create, not to reproduce; "besides," she added, "I am too proud of my gentlemen to admit

that they were only Mr. A. or Colonel B." She did not, however, suppose that her imaginary characters were of a higher order than are to be found in nature; for she said, when speaking of two of her great favorites, Edmund Bertram and Mr. Knightley: "They are very far from being what I know English gentlemen often are."

She certainly took a kind of parental interest in the beings whom she had created, and did not dismiss them from her thoughts when she had finished her last chapter. We have seen, in one of her letters, her personal affection for Darcy and Elizabeth; and when sending a copy of "Emma" to a friend whose daughter had been lately born, she wrote thus: "I trust you will be as glad to see my 'Emma' as I shall be to see your Jemima." She was very fond of Emma, but did not reckon on her being a general favorite; for, when commencing that work, she said, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." She would, if asked, tell us many little particulars about the subsequent career of some of her people. In this traditionary way we learned that Miss Steele never succeeded in catching the Doctor; that Kitty Bennet was satisfactorily married to a clergyman near Pemberley, while Mary obtained nothing higher than one of her uncle Philip's clerks, and was content to be considered a star in the society by Meriton; that the "considerable sum" given of Mrs. Norris to William Price was one pound; that Mr. Woodhouse survived his daughter's marriage, and kept her and Mr. Knightley from settling at Donwell, about two years; and that the

letters placed by Frank Churchill before Jane Fairfax, which she swept away unread, contained the word "pardon." Of the good people in "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion" we know nothing more than what is written; for before those works were published their author had been taken away from us, and all such amusing communications had ceased forever.

CHAPTER X.

Declining Health of Jane Austen — Elasticity of her Spirits — Her Resignation and Humility — Her Death.

Early in the year 1816 some family troubles disturbed the usually tranquil course of Jane Austen's life; and it is probable that the inward malady, which was to prove ultimately fatal, was already felt by her; for some distant friends,[1] whom she visited in the spring of that year, thought that her health was somewhat impaired, and observed that she went about her old haunts and recalled old recollections connected with them in a particular manner, as if she did not expect ever to see them again. It is not surprising that, under these circumstances, some of her letters were of a graver tone than had been customary with her, and expressed resignation rather than cheerfulness. In reference to these troubles in a letter to her brother Charles, after mentioning that she had been laid up with an attack of bilious fever, she says: "I live upstairs for the present, and am coddled. I am the only one of the party who has been so silly, but a weak body must excuse weak nerves." And again to another correspondent: "But I am getting too near complaint; it has been the appointment of God, however secondary causes may have

[1] The Fowles, of Kintbury, in Berkshire.

operated." But the elasticity of her spirits soon recovered their tone. It was in the latter half of that year that she addressed the two following lively letters to a nephew, one while he was at Winchester School, the other soon after he had left it: —

CHAWTON, July 9, 1816.

MY DEAR E., — Many thanks. A thank for every line, and as many to Mr. W. Digweed for coming. We have been wanting very much to hear of your mother, and are happy to find she continues to mend, but her illness must have been a very serious one indeed. When she is really recovered, she ought to try change of air, and come over to us. Tell your father that I am very much obliged to him for his share of your letter, and most sincerely join in the hope of her being eventually much the better for her present discipline. She has the comfort, moreover, of being confined in such weather as gives one little temptation to be out. It is really too bad, and has been too bad for a long time, much worse than any one can bear, and I begin to think it will never be fine again. This is a finesse of mine, for I have often observed that if one writes about the weather, it is generally completely changed before the letter is read. I wish it may prove so now, and that when Mr. W. Digweed reaches Steventon to-morrow, he may find you have had a long series of hot dry weather. We are a small party at present, only grandmamma, Mary Jane, and myself. Yalden's coach cleared off the rest yesterday. I am glad you

recollected to mention your being come home.[1] My heart began to sink within me when I had got so far through your letter without its being mentioned. I was dreadfully afraid that you might be detained at Winchester by severe illness, confined to your bed perhaps, and quite unable to hold a pen, and only dating from Steventon in order, with a mistaken sort of tenderness, to deceive me. But now I have no doubt of your being at home. I am sure you would not say it so seriously unless it actually were so. We saw a countless number of post-chaises full of boys pass by yesterday morning,[2] full of future heroes, legislators, fools, and villains. You have never thanked me for my last letter, which went by the cheese. I cannot bear not to be thanked. You will not pay us a visit yet of course; we must not think of it. Your mother must get well first, and you must go to Oxford and not be elected; after that a little change of scene may be good for you, and your physicians, I hope, will order you to the sea, or to a house by the side of a very considerable pond.[3] Oh! it rains again. It beats against the window. Mary Jane and I have been wet through once already to-day; we set off in the donkey-

[1] It seems that her young correspondent, after dating from his home, had been so superfluous as to state in his letter that he was returned home, and thus to have drawn on himself this banter.

[2] The road by which many Winchester boys returned home ran close to Chawton Cottage

[3] There was, though it exists no longer, a pond close to Chawton Cottage, at the junction of the Winchester and Gosport roads.

carriage for Farringdon, as I wanted to see the improvement Mr. Woolls is making; but we were obliged to turn back before we got there, but not soon enough to avoid a pelter all the way home. We met Mr. Woolls. I talked of its being bad weather for the hay, and he returned me the comfort of its being much worse for the wheat. We hear that Mrs. S. does not quit Tangier: why and wherefore? Do you know that our Browning is gone? You must prepare for a William when you come, a good-looking lad, civil and quiet, and seeming likely to do. Good-by. I am sure Mr. W. D.[1] will be astonished at my writing so much, for the paper is so thin that he will be able to count the lines if not to read them.

Yours affec^{ly},

JANE AUSTEN.

In the next letter will be found her description of her own style of composition, which has already appeared in the notice prefixed to "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion": —

CHAWTON, Monday, Dec. 16, 1816.

MY DEAR E., — One reason for my writing to you now is, that I may have the pleasure of directing to you Esq^{re}. I give you joy of having left Winchester. Now you may own how miserable you were there; now it will gradually all come out, your crimes and your miseries, — how often you went up by the Mail to London and threw away

[1] Mr. Digweed, who conveyed the letters to and from Chawton, was the gentleman named, in page 193, as renting the old manor-house and the large farm at Steventon.

fifty guineas at a tavern, and how often you were on the point of hanging yourself, restrained only, as some ill-natured aspersion upon poor old Winton has it, by the want of a tree within some miles of the city. Charles Knight and his companions passed through Chawton about nine this morning; later than it used to be. Uncle Henry and I had a glimpse of his handsome face, looking all health and good-humor. I wonder when you will come and see us. I know what I rather speculate upon, but shall say nothing. We think Uncle Henry in excellent looks. Look at him this moment, and think so too, if you have not done it before; and we have the great comfort of seeing decided improvement in Uncle Charles, both as to health, spirits, and appearance. And they are each of them so agreeable in their different way, and harmonize so well, that their visit is thorough enjoyment. Uncle Henry writes very superior sermons. You and I must try to get hold of one or two, and put them into our novels: it would be a fine help to a volume; and we could make our heroine read it aloud on a Sunday evening, just as well as Isabella Wardour, in the "Antiquary," is made to read the "History of the Hartz Demon" in the ruins of St. Ruth, though I believe, on recollection, Lovell is the reader. By the bye, my dear E., I am quite concerned for the loss your mother mentions in her letter. Two chapters and a half to be missing is monstrous! It is well that I have not been at Steventon lately, and therefore cannot be suspected of purloining them: two strong twigs and a half towards a nest of my own would

have been something. I do not think, however, that any theft of that sort would be really very useful to me. What should I do with your strong, manly, vigorous sketches, full of variety and glow? How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labor.

You will hear from Uncle Henry how well Anna is. She seems perfectly recovered. Ben was here on Saturday, to ask Uncle Charles and me to dine with them to-morrow, but I was forced to decline it, as the walk is beyond my strength (though I am otherwise very well), and this is not a season for donkey-carriages; and as we do not like to spare Uncle Charles, he has declined it too. Tuesday. Ah, ah! Mr. E. I doubt your seeing Uncle Henry at Steventon to-day. The weather will prevent your expecting him, I think. Tell your father, with Aunt Cass's love and mine, that the pickled cucumbers are extremely good, and tell him also — "tell him what you will." No, don't tell him what you will, but tell him that grandmamma begs him to make Joseph Hall pay his rent, if he can.

You must not be tired of reading the word uncle, for I have not done with it. Uncle Charles thanks your mother for her letter; it was a great pleasure to him to know that the parcel was received and gave so much satisfaction, and he begs her to be so good as to give three shillings for him to Dame Staples, which shall be allowed for in the payment of her debt here.

Adieu, Amiable! I hope Caroline behaves well to you.

Yours affec^{ly},

J. AUSTEN.

I cannot tell how soon she was aware of the serious nature of her malady. By God's mercy it was not attended with much suffering; so that she was able to tell her friends as in the foregoing letter, and perhaps sometimes to persuade herself, that, excepting want of strength, she was "otherwise very well;" but the progress of the disease became more and more manifest as the year advanced. The usual walk was at first shortened, and then discontinued; and air was sought in a donkey-carriage. Gradually, too, her habits of activity within the house ceased, and she was obliged to lie down much. The sitting-room contained only one sofa, which was frequently occupied by her mother, who was more than seventy years old. Jane would never use it, even in her mother's absence; but she contrived a sort of couch for herself with two or three chairs, and was pleased to say that this arrangement was more comfortable to her than a real sofa. Her reasons for this might have been left to be guessed, but for the importunities of a little niece, which obliged her to explain that if she herself had shown any inclination to use the sofa, her mother might have scrupled being on it so much as was good for her.

It is certain, however, that the mind did not share in this decay of the bodily strength. "Persuasion" was not finished before the middle of

August in that year; and the manner in which it was then completed affords proof that neither the critical nor the creative powers of the author were at all impaired. The book had been brought to an end in July; and the re-engagement of the hero and heroine effected in a totally different manner in a scene laid at Admiral Croft's lodgings. But her performance did not satisfy her. She thought it tame and flat, and was desirous of producing something better. This weighed upon her mind, the more so probably on account of the weak state of her health, so that one night she retired to rest in very low spirits. But such depression was little in accordance with her nature, and was soon shaken off. The next morning she awoke to more cheerful views and brighter inspirations; the sense of power revived, and imagination resumed its course. She cancelled the condemned chapter, and wrote two others, entirely different, in its stead. The result is that we possess the visit of the Musgrove party to Bath: the crowded and animated scenes at the White Hart Hotel; and the charming conversation between Captain Harville and Anne Elliot, overheard by Captain Wentworth, by which the two faithful lovers were at last led to understand each other's feelings. The tenth and eleventh chapters of "Persuasion," then, rather than the actual winding-up of the story, contain the latest of her printed compositions, her last contribution to the entertainment of the public. Perhaps it may be thought that she has seldom written anything more brilliant; and that independent of the original manner in which the *dénouement* is

brought about, the pictures of Charles Musgrove's good-natured boyishness and of his wife's jealous selfishness would have been incomplete without these finishing strokes. The cancelled chapter exists in manuscript. It is certainly inferior to the two which were substituted for it: but it was such as some writers and some readers might have been contented with; and it contained touches which scarcely any other hand could have given, the suppression of which may be almost a matter of regret.[1]

The following letter was addressed to her friend Miss Bigg, then staying at Streatham with her sister, the wife of the Reverend Herbert Hill, uncle of Robert Southey. It appears to have been written three days before she began her last work, which will be noticed in another chapter; and shows that she was not at that time aware of the serious nature of her malady: —

Chawton, January 24, 1817.

My dear Alethea,— I think it time there should be a little writing between us, though I believe the epistolary debt is on your side, and I hope this will find all the Streatham party well, neither carried away by the flood, nor rheumatic through the damps. Such mild weather is, you know, delightful to us, and though we have a great many ponds, and a fine running stream through the meadows on the other side of the road, it is nothing but what beautifies us and does to talk of. I have cer-

[1] This cancelled chapter is now printed, in compliance with the requests addressed to me from several quarters.

tainly gained strength through the winter, and am not far from being well; and I think I understand my own case now so much better than I did, as to be able by care to keep off any serious return of illness. I am convinced that bile is at the bottom of all I have suffered, which makes it easy to know how to treat myself. You will be glad to hear thus much of me, I am sure. We have just had a few days' visit from Edward, who brought us a good account of his father; and the very circumstance of his coming at all, of his father's being able to spare him, is itself a good account. He grows still, and still improves in appearance, at least in the estimation of his aunts, who love him better and better, as they see the sweet temper and warm affections of the boy confirmed in the young man: I tried hard to persuade him that he must have some message for William,[1] but in vain. . . . This is not a time of year for donkey-carriages, and our donkeys are necessarily having so long a run of luxurious idleness that I suppose we shall find they have forgotten much of their education when we use them again. We do not use two at once, however; don't imagine such excesses. . . . Our own new clergyman[2] is expected here very soon, perhaps in time to assist Mr. Papillon on Sunday. I shall be very glad when the first hearing is over. It will be a nervous hour for our pew, though we hear that he acquits himself with as much ease and collectedness as if he had been used to it all his

[1] Miss Bigg's nephew, the present Sir William Heathcote, of Hursley.

[2] Her brother Henry, who had been ordained late in life.

life. We have no chance, we know, of seeing you between Streatham and Winchester, you go the other road and are engaged to two or three houses; if there should be any change, however, you know how welcome you would be. . . . We have been reading the "Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo," and generally with much approbation. Nothing will please all the world, you know; but parts of it suit me better than much that he has written before. The opening — the proem I believe he calls it — is very beautiful. Poor man! one cannot but grieve for the loss of the son so fondly described. Has he at all recovered it? What do Mr. and Mrs. Hill know about his present state?

Yours affly,

J. Austen.

The real object of this letter is to ask you for a receipt, but I thought it genteel not to let it appear early. We remember some excellent orange wine at Manydown, made from Seville oranges entirely or chiefly. I should be very much obliged to you for the receipt, if you can command it within a few weeks.

On the day before, January 23d, she had written to her niece in the same hopeful tone: "I feel myself getting stronger than I was, and can so perfectly walk to Alton or back again without fatigue, that I hope to be able to do both when summer comes."

Alas! summer came to her only on her deathbed. March 17th is the last date to be found in

the manuscript on which she was engaged; and as the watch of the drowned man indicates the time of his death, so does this final date seem to fix the period when her mind could no longer pursue its accustomed course.

And here I cannot do better than quote the words of the niece to whose private records of her aunt's life and character I have been so often indebted: "I do not know how early the alarming symptoms of her malady came on. It was in the following March that I had the first idea of her being seriously ill. It had been settled that about the end of that month or the beginning of April I should spend a few days at Chawton, in the absence of my father and mother, who were just then engaged with Mrs. Leigh Perrot in arranging her late husband's affairs; but Aunt Jane became too ill to have me in the house, and so I went instead to my sister Mrs. Lefroy at Wyards'. The next day we walked over to Chawton to make inquiries after our aunt. She was then keeping her room, but said she would see us, and we went up to her. She was in her dressing-gown, and was sitting quite like an invalid in an armchair, but she got up and kindly greeted us, and then, pointing to seats which had been arranged for us by the fire, she said, 'There is a chair for the married lady, and a little stool for you, Caroline.'[1] It is strange, but those trifling words were the last of hers that I can remember, for I retain no recollection of what was said by any one in the conversation that ensued.

[1] The writer was at that time under twelve years old.

I was struck by the alteration in herself. She was very pale, her voice was weak and low, and there was about her a general appearance of debility and suffering; but I have been told that she never had much acute pain. She was not equal to the exertion of talking to us, and our visit to the sick-room was a very short one, Aunt Cassandra soon taking us away. I do not suppose we stayed a quarter of an hour; and I never saw Aunt Jane again."

In May, 1817, she was persuaded to remove to Winchester, for the sake of medical advice from Mr. Lyford. The Lyfords have, for some generations, maintained a high character in Winchester for medical skill, and the Mr. Lyford of that day was a man of more than provincial reputation, in whom great London practitioners expressed confidence. Mr. Lyford spoke encouragingly. It was not, of course, his business to extinguish hope in his patient, but I believe that he had, from the first, very little expectation of a permanent cure. All that was gained by the removal from home was the satisfaction of having done the best that could be done, together with such alleviations of suffering as superior medical skill could afford.

Jane and her sister Cassandra took lodgings in College Street. They had two kind friends living in the Close, Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Bigg, the mother and aunt of the present Sir Wm. Heathcote, of Hursley, between whose family and ours a close friendship has existed for several generations. These friends did all that they could to promote the comfort of the sisters, during that

sad sojourn in Winchester, both by their society, and by supplying those little conveniences in which a lodging-house was likely to be deficient. It was shortly after settling in these lodgings that she wrote to a nephew the following characteristic letter, no longer, alas! in her former strong, clear hand: —

Mrs. David's, College St., Winton,
Tuesday, May 27th.

There is no better way, my dearest E., of thanking you for your affectionate concern for me during my illness than by telling you myself, as soon as possible, that I continue to get better. I will not boast of my handwriting; neither that nor my face have yet recovered their proper beauty, but in other respects I gain strength very fast. I am now out of bed from nine in the morning to ten at night: upon the sofa, it is true, but I eat my meals with Aunt Cassandra in a rational way, and can employ myself, and walk from one room to another. Mr. Lyford says he will cure me, and if he fails, I shall draw up a memorial and lay it before the Dean and Chapter, and have no doubt of redress from that pious, learned, and disinterested body. Our lodgings are very comfortable. We have a neat little drawing-room with a bow window overlooking Dr. Gabell's garden.[1] Thanks to the kindness of your father and mother in sending me their carriage, my journey hither on Saturday was performed with very little fatigue, and had it been

[1] It was the corner house in College Street, at the entrance to Commoners.

a fine day, I think I should have felt none; but it distressed me to see Uncle Henry and Wm. Knight, who kindly attended us on horseback, riding in the rain almost the whole way. We expect a visit from them to-morrow, and hope they will stay the night; and on Thursday, which is a confirmation and a holiday, we are to get Charles out to breakfast. We have had but one visit from him, poor fellow, as he is in sick-room, but he hopes to be out to-night. We see Mrs. Heathcote every day, and William is to call upon us soon. God bless you, my dear E. If ever you are ill, may you be as tenderly nursed as I have been. May the same blessed alleviations of anxious, sympathizing friends be yours: and may you possess, as I dare say you will, the greatest blessing of all in the consciousness of not being unworthy of their love. I could not feel this.

Your very affec^te^ Aunt,

J. A.

The following extract from a letter which has been before printed, written soon after the former, breathes the same spirit of humility and thankfulness: —

"I will only say further that my dearest sister, my tender, watchful, indefatigable nurse, has not been made ill by her exertions. As to what I owe her, and the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it, and pray God to bless them more and more."

Throughout her illness she was nursed by her sister, often assisted by her sister-in-law, my mother. Both were with her when she died. Two of her

brothers, who were clergymen, lived near enough to Winchester to be in frequent attendance, and to administer the services suitable for a Christian's death-bed. While she used the language of hope to her correspondents, she was fully aware of her danger, though not appalled by it. It is true that there was much to attach her to life. She was happy in her family; she was just beginning to feel confidence in her own success; and, no doubt, the exercise of her great talents was an enjoyment in itself. We may well believe that she would gladly have lived longer; but she was enabled without dismay or complaint to prepare for death. She was a humble, believing Christian. Her life had been passed in the performance of home duties and the cultivation of domestic affections, without any self-seeking or craving after applause. She had always sought, as it were by instinct, to promote the happiness of all who came within her influence, and doubtless she had her reward in the peace of mind which was granted her in her last days. Her sweetness of temper never failed. She was ever considerate and grateful to those who attended on her. At times, when she felt rather better, her playfulness of spirit revived, and she amused them even in their sadness. Once, when she thought herself near her end, she said what she imagined might be her last words to those around her, and particularly thanked her sister-in-law for being with her, saying, "You have always been a kind sister to me, Mary." When the end at last came, she sank rapidly, and on being asked by her attendants whether there was anything that she

NORTH AISLE OF WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

BURIAL PLACE OF JANE AUSTEN.

wanted, her reply was, "*Nothing but death.*" These were her last words. In quietness and peace she breathed her last on the morning of July 18, 1817.

On the 24th of that month she was buried in Winchester Cathedral,[1] near the centre of the north aisle, almost opposite to the beautiful chantry tomb of William of Wykeham. A large slab of black marble in the pavement marks the place. Her own family only attended the funeral. Her sister returned to her desolated home, there to devote herself for ten years to the care of her aged mother, and to live much on the memory of her lost sister, till called many years later to rejoin her. Her brothers went back sorrowing to their several homes. They were very fond and very proud of her. They were attached to her by her talents, her virtues, and her engaging manners; and each loved afterwards to fancy a resemblance in some niece or daughter of his own to the dear sister Jane, whose perfect equal they yet never expected to see.

[1] Inscription on Jane Austen's tomb: —

JANE AUSTEN,

KNOWN TO MANY BY HER WRITINGS, ENDEARED TO HER FAMILY BY THE VARIED CHARMS OF HER CHARACTER, AND ENNOBLED BY CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PIETY, WAS BORN AT STEVENTON IN THE COUNTY OF HANTS, DEC^{r} XVI. MDCCLXXV. AND BURIED IN THIS CATHEDRAL JULY XXIV. MDCCCXVII.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." — PROV. xxxi. v. xxvi.

CHAPTER XI.

The Cancelled Chapter (Chap. X.) of "Persuasion."

With all this knowledge of Mr. Elliot and this authority to impart it, Anne left Westgate Buildings, her mind deeply busy in revolving what she had heard, feeling, thinking, recalling, and foreseeing everything, shocked at Mr. Elliot, sighing over future Kellynch, and pained for Lady Russell, whose confidence in him had been entire. The embarrassment which must be felt from this hour in his presence! How to behave to him? How to get rid of him? What to do by any of the party at home? Where to be blind? Where to be active? It was altogether a confusion of images and doubts — a perplexity, an agitation which she could not see the end of. And she was in Gay Street, and still so much engrossed that she started on being addressed by Admiral Croft, as if he were a person unlikely to be met there. It was within a few steps of his own door.

"You are going to call upon my wife," said he. "She will be very glad to see you."

Anne denied it.

"No! she really had not time, she was in her way home;" but while she spoke the Admiral had stepped back and knocked at the door, calling out:

"Yes, yes; do go in; she is all alone; go in and rest yourself."

Anne felt so little disposed at this time to be in company of any sort, that it vexed her to be thus constrained, but she was obliged to stop.

"Since you are so very kind," said she, "I will just ask Mrs. Croft how she does, but I really cannot stay five minutes. You are sure she is quite alone?"

The possibility of Captain Wentworth had occurred; and most fearfully anxious was she to be assured either that he was within or that he was not, — which might have been a question.

"Oh, yes! quite alone, nobody but her mantua-maker with her, and they have been shut up together this half-hour, so it must be over soon."

"Her mantua-maker! Then I am sure my calling now would be most inconvenient. Indeed you must allow me to leave my card and be so good as to explain it afterwards to Mrs. Croft."

"No, no, not at all, not at all, — she will be very happy to see you. Mind, I will not swear that she has not something particular to say to you, but that will all come out in the right place. I give no hints. Why, Miss Elliot, we begin to hear strange things of you," smiling in her face. "But you have not much the look of it, as grave as a little judge!"

Anne blushed.

"Ay, ay, that will do now, it is all right. I thought we were not mistaken."

She was left to guess at the direction of his suspicions; the first wild idea had been of some disclosure from his brother-in-law, but she was ashamed the next moment, and felt how far more

probable it was that he should be meaning Mr. Elliot. The door was opened, and the man evidently beginning to deny his mistress, when the sight of his master stopped him. The Admiral enjoyed the joke exceedingly. Anne thought his triumph over Stephen rather too long. At last, however, he was able to invite her upstairs, and stepping before her said, "I will just go up with you myself and show you in. I cannot stay, because I must go to the Post-Office; but if you will only sit down for five minutes I am sure Sophy will come, and you will find nobody to disturb you, — there is nobody but Frederick here," opening the door as he spoke. Such a person to be passed over as nobody to her! After being allowed to feel quite secure, indifferent, at her ease, to have it burst on her that she was to be the next moment in the same room with him! No time for recollection! for planning behavior or regulating manners! There was time only to turn pale before she had passed through the door, and met the astonished eyes of Captain Wentworth, who was sitting by the fire, pretending to read, and prepared for no greater surprise than the Admiral's hasty return.

Equally unexpected was the meeting on each side. There was nothing to be done, however, but to stifle feelings, and to be quietly polite; and the Admiral was too much on the alert to leave any troublesome pause. He repeated again what he had said before about his wife and everybody, insisted on Anne's sitting down and being perfectly comfortable, — was sorry he must leave her himself,

but was sure Mrs. Croft would be down very soon, and would go upstairs and give her notice directly. Anne was sitting down; but now she arose, again to entreat him not to interrupt Mrs. Croft, and re-urge the wish of going away and calling another time. But the Admiral would not hear of it; and if she did not return to the charge with unconquerable perseverance, or did not with a more passive determination walk quietly out of the room (as certainly she might have done), may she not be pardoned? If she had no horror of a few minutes' *tête-à-tête* with Captain Wentworth, may she not be pardoned for not wishing to give him the idea that she had? She reseated herself, and the Admiral took leave, but on reaching the door, said, —

"Frederick, a word with you if you please."

Captain Wentworth went to him, and instantly, before they were well out of the room, the Admiral continued, —

"As I am going to leave you together, it is but fair I should give you something to talk of; and so, if you please —"

Here the door was very firmly closed, she could guess by which of the two — and she lost entirely what immediately followed, but it was impossible for her not to distinguish parts of the rest, for the Admiral, on the strength of the door's being shut, was speaking without any management of voice, though she could hear his companion trying to check him. She could not doubt their being speaking of her. She heard her own name and Kellynch repeatedly. She was very much disturbed.

She knew not what to do or what to expect, and among other agonies felt the possibility of Captain Wentworth's not returning into the room at all, which, after her consenting to stay, would have been — too bad for language. They seemed to be talking of the Admiral's lease of Kellynch. She heard him say something of the lease being signed — or not signed; that was not likely to be a very agitating subject, but then followed, —

"I hate to be at an uncertainty. I must know at once. Sophy thinks the same."

Then in a lower tone Captain Wentworth seemed remonstrating, wanting to be excused, wanting to put something off.

"Phoo, phoo," answered the Admiral, "now is the time; if you will not speak, I will stop and speak myself."

"Very well, sir, very well, sir," followed with some impatience from his companion, opening the door as he spoke, —

"You will then, you promise you will?" replied the Admiral in all the power of his natural voice, unbroken even by one thin door.

"Yes, sir, yes." And the Admiral was hastily left, the door was closed, and the moment arrived in which Anne was alone with Captain Wentworth.

She could not attempt to see how he looked, but he walked immediately to a window as if irresolute and embarrassed, and for about the space of five seconds she repented what she had done, — censured it as unwise, blushed over it as indelicate. She longed to be able to speak of the

weather or the concert, but could only compass the relief of taking a newspaper in her hand. The distressing pause was over, however; he turned round in half a minute, and coming towards the table where she sat, said in a voice of effort and constraint, —

"You must have heard too much already, Madam, to be in any doubt of my having promised Admiral Croft to speak to you on a particular subject, and this conviction determines me to do so, however repugnant to my — to all my sense of propriety to be taking so great a liberty! You will acquit me of impertinence, I trust, by considering me as speaking only for another, and speaking by necessity; and the Admiral is a man who can never be thought impertinent by one who knows him as you do. His intentions are always the kindest and the best, and you will perceive he is actuated by none other in the application which I am now, with — with very peculiar feelings — obliged to make." He stopped, but merely to recover breath, not seeming to expect any answer. Anne listened as if her life depended on the issue of his speech. He proceeded with a forced alacrity: —

"The Admiral, Madam, was this morning confidently informed that you were — upon my soul, I am quite at a loss, ashamed," breathing and speaking quickly, — "the awkwardness of giving information of this kind to one of the parties — you can be at no loss to understand me. It was very confidently said that Mr. Elliot — that everything was settled in the family for a union be-

tween Mr. Elliot and yourself. It was added that you were to live at Kellynch, — that Kellynch was to be given up. This the Admiral knew could not be correct. But it occurred to him that it might be the wish of the parties. And my commission from him, Madam, is to say, that if the family wish is such, his lease of Kellynch shall be cancelled, and he and my sister will provide themselves with another home, without imagining themselves to be doing anything which under similar circumstances would not be done for them. This is all, Madam. A very few words in reply from you will be sufficient. That I should be the person commissioned on this subject is extraordinary! and believe me, Madam, it is no less painful. A very few words, however, will put an end to the awkwardness and distress we may both be feeling."

Anne spoke a word or two, but they were unintelligible; and before she could command herself, he added: "If you will only tell me that the Admiral may address a line to Sir Walter, it will be enough. Pronounce only the words, 'He may,' and I shall immediately follow him with your message."

"No, Sir," said Anne; "there is no message. You are misin— the Admiral is misinformed. I do justice to the kindness of his intentions, but he is quite mistaken. There is no truth in any such report."

He was a moment silent. She turned her eyes towards him for the first time since his re-entering the room. His color was varying, and he was look-

ing at her with all the power and keenness which she believed no other eyes than his possessed.

"No truth in any such report?" he repeated. "No truth in any part of it?"

"None."

He had been standing by a chair, enjoying the relief of leaning on it or of playing with it. He now sat down, drew it a little nearer to her, and looked with an expression which had something more than penetration in it, — something softer. Her countenance did not discourage. It was a silent but a very powerful dialogue; on his supplication, on hers acceptance. Still a little nearer, and a hand taken and pressed; and "Anne, my own dear Anne!" bursting forth in all the fulness of exquisite feeling, — and all suspense and indecision were over. They were reunited. They were restored to all that had been lost. They were carried back to the past with only an increase of attachment and confidence, and only such a flutter of present delight as made them little fit for the interruption of Mrs. Croft when she joined them not long afterwards. She, probably, in the observations of the next ten minutes saw something to suspect; and though it was hardly possible for a woman of her description to wish the mantua-maker had imprisoned her longer, she might be very likely wishing for some excuse to run about the house, some storm to break the windows above, or a summons to the Admiral's shoemaker below. Fortune favored them all, however, in another way, in a gentle, steady rain, just happily set in as the Admiral returned

and Anne rose to go. She was earnestly invited to stay dinner. A note was despatched to Camden Place, and she stayed, — stayed till ten at night; and during that time the husband and wife, either by the wife's contrivance, or by simply going on in their usual way, were frequently out of the room together, — gone upstairs to hear a noise, or downstairs to settle their accounts, or upon the landing to trim the lamp. And these precious moments were turned to so good an account that all the most anxious feelings of the past were gone through. Before they parted at night, Anne had the felicity of being assured that in the first place (so far from being altered for the worse), she had gained inexpressibly in personal loveliness; and that as to character, hers was now fixed on his mind as perfection itself, maintaining the just medium of fortitude and gentleness, — that he had never ceased to love and prefer her, though it had been only at Uppercross that he had learnt to do her justice, and only at Lyme that he had begun to understand his own feelings; that at Lyme he had received lessons of more than one kind, — the passing admiration of Mr. Elliot had at least roused him, and the scene on the Cobb, and at Captain Harville's, had fixed her superiority. In his preceding attempts to attach himself to Louisa Musgrove (the attempts of anger and pique), he protested that he had continually felt the impossibility of really caring for Louisa, though till that day, till the leisure for reflection which followed it, he had not understood the perfect excellence of the mind with which Louisa's could so ill bear

comparison; or the perfect, the unrivalled hold it possessed over his own. There he had learnt to distinguish between the steadiness of principle and the obstinacy of self-will, between the darings of heedlessness and the resolution of a collected mind; there he had seen everything to exalt in his estimation the woman he had lost, and there had begun to deplore the pride, the folly, the madness of resentment, which had kept him from trying to regain her when thrown in his way. From that period to the present had his penance been the most severe. He had no sooner been free from the horror and remorse attending the first few days of Louisa's accident, no sooner had begun to feel himself alive again, than he had begun to feel himself, though alive, not at liberty.

He found that he was considered by his friend Harville an engaged man. The Harvilles entertained not a doubt of a mutual attachment between him and Louisa; and though this to a degree was contradicted instantly, it yet made him feel that perhaps by her family, by everybody, by herself even, the same idea might be held, and that he was not free in honor, though if such were to be the conclusion, too free, alas! in heart. He had never thought justly on this subject before, and he had not sufficiently considered that his excessive intimacy at Uppercross must have its danger of ill consequence in many ways; and that while trying whether he could attach himself to either of the girls, he might be exciting unpleasant reports if not raising unrequited regard.

He found too late that he had entangled himself, and that precisely as he became thoroughly satisfied of his not caring for Louisa at all, he must regard himself as bound to her if her feelings for him were what the Harvilles supposed. It determined him to leave Lyme, and await her perfect recovery elsewhere. He would gladly weaken by any fair means whatever sentiment or speculations concerning them might exist; and he went therefore into Shropshire, meaning after a while to return to the Crofts at Kellynch, and act as he found requisite.

He had remained in Shropshire, lamenting the blindness of his own pride and the blunders of his own calculations, till at once released from Louisa by the astonishing felicity of her engagement with Benwick.

Bath — Bath had instantly followed in thought, and not long after in fact. To Bath — to arrive with hope, to be torn by jealousy at the first sight of Mr. Elliot; to experience all the changes of each at the concert; to be miserable by the morning's circumstantial report, to be now more happy than language could express, or any heart but his own be capable of.

He was very eager and very delightful in the description of what he had felt at the concert; the evening seemed to have been made up of exquisite moments. The moment of her stepping forward in the octagon room to speak to him, the moment of Mr. Elliot's appearing and tearing her away, and one or two subsequent moments, marked by returning hope or increasing despondency, were dwelt on with energy.

"To see you," cried he, "in the midst of those who could not be my well-wishers; to see your cousin close by you, conversing and smiling, and feel all the horrible eligibilities and proprieties of the match! To consider it as the certain wish of every being who could hope to influence you! Even if your own feelings were reluctant or indifferent, to consider what powerful support would be his! Was it not enough to make the fool of me which I appeared? How could I look on without agony? Was not the very sight of the friend who sat behind you; was not the recollection of what had been, the knowledge of her influence, the indelible, immovable impression of what persuasion had once done, — was it not all against me?"

"You should have distinguished," replied Anne. "You should not have suspected me now; the case so different, and my age so different. If I was wrong in yielding to persuasion once, remember it was to persuasion exerted on the side of safety, not of risk. When I yielded, I thought it was to duty; but no duty could be called in aid here. In marrying a man indifferent to me, all risk would have been incurred, and all duty violated."

"Perhaps I ought to have reasoned thus," he replied; "but I could not. I could not derive benefit from the late knowledge I had acquired of your character. I could not bring it into play; it was overwhelmed, buried, lost in those earlier feelings which I had been smarting under year after year. I could think of you only as one who had yielded, who had given me up, who had been

influenced by any one rather than by me. I saw you with the very person who had guided you in that year of misery. I had no reason to believe her of less authority now. The force of habit was to be added."

"I should have thought," said Anne, "that my manner to yourself might have spared you much or all of this."

"No, no! Your manner might be only the ease which your engagement to another man would give. I left you in this belief; and yet — I was determined to see you again. My spirits rallied with the morning, and I felt that I had still a motive for remaining here. The Admiral's news, indeed, was a revulsion; since that moment I have been divided what to do, and had it been confirmed, this would have been my last day in Bath."

There was time for all this to pass, with such interruptions only as enhanced the charm of the communication, and Bath could hardly contain any other two beings at once so rationally and so rapturously happy as during that evening occupied the sofa of Mrs. Croft's drawing-room in Gay Street.

Captain Wentworth had taken care to meet the Admiral as he returned into the house, to satisfy him as to Mr. Elliot and Kellynch; and the delicacy of the Admiral's good-nature kept him from saying another word on the subject to Anne. He was quite concerned lest he might have been giving her pain by touching on a tender part — who could say? She might be liking her cousin better than he liked her; and upon recollection, if they had been to marry at all, why should they have waited

so long? When the evening closed, it is probable that the Admiral received some new ideas from his wife, whose particularly friendly manner in parting with her gave Anne the gratifying persuasion of her seeing and approving. It had been such a day to Anne; the hours which had passed since her leaving Camden Place had done so much! She was almost bewildered — almost too happy in looking back. It was necessary to sit up half the night, and lie awake the remainder, to comprehend with composure her present state, and pay for the overplus of bliss by headache and fatigue.

Then follows Chapter XI., *i. e.* XII. in the published book, and at the end is written, —

Finis, July 18, 1816.

CHAPTER XII.

The Last Work.

Jane Austen was taken from us: how much unexhausted talent perished with her, how largely she might yet have contributed to the entertainment of her readers, if her life had been prolonged, cannot be known; but it is certain that the mine at which she had so long labored was not worked out, and that she was still diligently employed in collecting fresh materials from it. "Persuasion" had been finished in August, 1816; some time was probably given to correcting it for the press; but on the 27th of the following January, according to the date on her own manuscript, she began a new novel, and worked at it up to the 17th of March. The chief part of this manuscript is written in her usual firm and neat hand, but some of the latter pages seem to have been first traced in pencil, probably when she was too weak to sit long at her desk, and written over in ink afterwards. The quantity produced does not indicate any decline of power or industry, for in those seven weeks twelve chapters had been completed. It is more difficult to judge of the quality of a work so little advanced. It had received no name; there was scarcely any indication what the course of the story was to be, nor was any heroine yet perceptible,

who, like Fanny Price or Anne Elliot, might draw round her the sympathies of the reader. Such an unfinished fragment cannot be presented to the public; but I am persuaded that some of Jane Austen's admirers will be glad to learn something about the latest creations which were forming themselves in her mind; and therefore, as some of the principal characters were already sketched in with a vigorous hand, I will try to give an idea of them, illustrated by extracts from the work.

The scene is laid at Sanditon, a village on the Sussex coast, just struggling into notoriety as a bathing-place, under the patronage of the two principal proprietors of the parish, Mr. Parker and Lady Denham.

Mr. Parker was an amiable man, with more enthusiasm than judgment, whose somewhat shallow mind overflowed with the one idea of the prosperity of Sanditon, together with a jealous contempt of the rival village of Brinshore, where a similar attempt was going on. To the regret of his much-enduring wife, he had left his family mansion, with all its ancestral comforts of gardens, shrubberies, and shelter, situated in a valley some miles inland, and had built a new residence — a Trafalgar House — on the bare brow of the hill overlooking Sanditon and the sea, exposed to every wind that blows; but he will confess to no discomforts nor suffer his family to feel any from the change. The following extract brings him before the reader, mounted on his hobby: —

"He wanted to secure the promise of a visit, and to get as many of the family as his own house

would hold to follow him to Sanditon as soon as possible; and, healthy as all the Heywoods undeniably were, he foresaw that every one of them would be benefited by the sea. He held it indeed as certain that no person, however upheld for the present by fortuitous aids of exercise and spirit in a semblance of health, could be really in a state of secure and permanent health without spending at least six weeks by the sea every year. The sea air and sea-bathing together were nearly infallible: one or other of them being a match for every disorder of the stomach, the lungs, or the blood. They were anti-spasmodic, anti-pulmonary, anti-bilious, and anti-rheumatic. Nobody could catch cold by the sea; nobody wanted appetite by the sea; nobody wanted spirits; nobody wanted strength. They were healing, softening, relaxing, fortifying, and bracing, seemingly just as was wanted; sometimes one, sometimes the other. If the sea-breeze failed, the sea-bath was the certain corrective; and when bathing disagreed, the sea-breeze was evidently designed by nature for the cure. His eloquence, however, could not prevail. Mr. and Mrs. Heywood never left home. . . . The maintenance, education, and fitting out of fourteen children demanded a very quiet, settled, careful course of life; and obliged them to be stationary and healthy at Willingden. What prudence had at first enjoined was now rendered pleasant by habit. They never left home, and they had a gratification in saying so."

Lady Denham's was a very different character. She was a rich vulgar widow, with a sharp but

narrow mind, who cared for the prosperity of Sanditon only so far as it might increase the value of her own property. She is thus described: —

"Lady Denham had been a rich Miss Brereton, born to wealth, but not to education. Her first husband had been a Mr. Hollis, a man of considerable property in the country, of which a large share of the parish of Sanditon, with manor and mansion-house, formed a part. He had been an elderly man when she married him; her own age about thirty. Her motives for such a match could be little understood at the distance of forty years, but she had so well nursed and pleased Mr. Hollis that at his death he left her everything, — all his estates, and all at her disposal. After a widowhood of some years she had been induced to marry again. The late Sir Harry Denham, of Denham Park, in the neighborhood of Sanditon, succeeded in removing her and her large income to his own domains; but he could not suceeed in the views of permanently enriching his family which were attributed to him. She had been too wary to put anything out of her own power, and when, on Sir Harry's death, she returned again to her own house at Sanditon, she was said to have made this boast, 'that though she had got nothing but her title from the family, yet she had given nothing for it.' For the title it was to be supposed that she married.

"Lady Denham was indeed a great lady, beyond the common wants of society; for she had many thousands a year to bequeath, and three distinct sets of people to be courted by: — her own rela-

tions, who might very reasonably wish for her original thirty thousand pounds among them; the legal heirs of Mr. Hollis, who might hope to be more indebted to her sense of justice than he had allowed them to be to his; and those members of the Denham family for whom her second husband had hoped to make a good bargain. By all these, or by branches of them, she had, no doubt, been long and still continued to be well attacked; and of these three divisions Mr. Parker did not hesitate to say that Mr. Hollis's kindred were the least in favor, and Sir Harry Denham's the most. The former, he believed, had done themselves irremediable harm by expressions of very unwise resentment at the time of Mr. Hollis's death: the latter, to the advantage of being the remnant of a connection which she certainly valued, joined those of having been known to her from their childhood, and of being always at hand to pursue their interests by seasonable attentions. But another claimant was now to be taken into account: a young female relation whom Lady Denham had been induced to receive into her family. After having always protested against any such addition, and often enjoyed the repeated defeat she had given to every attempt of her own relations to introduce 'this young lady, or that young lady,' as a companion at Sanditon House, she had brought back with her from London last Michaelmas a Miss Clara Brereton, who bid fair to vie in favor with Sir Edward Denham, and to secure for herself and her family that share of the accumulated property which they had certainly the best right to inherit."

Lady Denham's character comes out in a conversation which takes place at Mr. Parker's tea-table.

"The conversation turned entirely upon Sanditon, its present number of visitants, and the chances of a good season. It was evident that Lady Denham had more anxiety, more fears of loss than her coadjutor. She wanted to have the place fill faster, and seemed to have many harassing apprehensions of the lodgings being in some instances underlet. To a report that a large boarding-school was expected she replies, 'Ah, well, no harm in that. They will stay their six weeks, and out of such a number who knows but some may be consumptive, and want asses' milk; and I have two milch asses at this very time. But perhaps the little Misses may hurt the furniture. I hope they will have a good sharp governess to look after them.' But she wholly disapproved of Mr. Parker's wish to secure the residence of a medical man amongst them. 'Why, what should we do with a doctor here? It would only be encouraging our servants and the poor to fancy themselves ill, if there was a doctor at hand. Oh, pray let us have none of that tribe at Sanditon: we go on very well as we are. There is the sea, and the downs, and my milch asses: and I have told Mrs. Whitby that if anybody inquires for a chamber horse, they may be supplied at a fair rate (poor Mr. Hollis's chamber horse, as good as new); and what can people want more? I have lived seventy good years in the world, and never took physic, except twice, and never saw the face of a doctor in all my

life on my own account; and I really believe if my poor dear Sir Harry had never seen one neither, he would have been alive now. Ten fees, one after another, did the men take who sent him out of the world. I beseech you, Mr. Parker, no doctors here.' "

This lady's character comes out more strongly in a conversation with Mr. Parker's guest, Miss Charlotte Heywood. Sir Edward Denham with his sister Esther and Clara Brereton have just left them.

"Charlotte accepted an invitation from Lady Denham to remain with her on the terrace, when the others adjourned to the library. Lady Denham, like a true great lady, talked, and talked only of her own concerns, and Charlotte listened. Taking hold of Charlotte's arm with the ease of one who felt that any notice from her was a favor, and communicative from the same sense of importance, or from a natural love of talking, she immediately said in a tone of great satisfaction, and with a look of arch sagacity: —

" 'Miss Esther wants me to invite her and her brother to spend a week with me at Sanditon House, as I did last summer, but I sha'n't. She has been trying to get round me every way with her praise of this and her praise of that; but I saw what she was about. I saw through it all. I am not very easily taken in, my dear.'

"Charlotte could think of nothing more harmless to be said than the simple inquiry of, 'Sir Edward and Miss Denham?'

" 'Yes, my dear; my young folks, as I call them,

sometimes; for I take them very much by the hand, and had them with me last summer, about this time, for a week, — from Monday to Monday, — and very delighted and thankful they were. For they are very good young people, my dear. I would not have you think that I only notice them for poor dear Sir Harry's sake. No, no; they are very deserving themselves, or, trust me, they would not be so much in my company. I am not the woman to help anybody blindfold. I always take care to know what I am about and who I have to deal with before I stir a finger. I do not think I was ever overreached in my life; and that is a good deal for a woman to say that has been twice married. Poor dear Sir Harry (between ourselves) thought at first to have got more, but (with a bit of a sigh) he is gone, and we must not find fault with the dead. Nobody could live happier together than us: and he was a very honorable man; quite the gentleman, of ancient family: and when he died I gave Sir Edward his gold watch.'

"This was said with a look at her companion which implied its right to produce a great impression; and seeing no rapturous astonishment in Charlotte's countenance, she added quickly, —

"'He did not bequeath it to his nephew, my dear; it was no bequest; it was not in the will. He only told me, and that but once, that he should wish his nephew to have his watch; but it need not have been binding, if I had not chose it.'

"'Very kind indeed, very handsome!' said Charlotte, absolutely forced to affect admiration.

"'Yes, my dear; and it is not the only kind thing I have done by him. I have been a very liberal friend to Sir Edward; and, poor young man, he needs it bad enough. For, though I am only the dowager, my dear, and he is the heir, things do not stand between us in the way they usually do between those two parties. Not a shilling do I receive from the Denham estate. Sir Edward has no payments to make me. He don't stand uppermost, believe me; it is I that help him.'

"'Indeed! he is a very fine young man, and particularly elegant in his address.'

"This was said chiefly for the sake of saying something; but Charlotte directly saw that it was laying her open to suspicion, by Lady Denham's giving a shrewd glance at her, and replying, —

"'Yes, yes; he 's very well to look at, and it is to be hoped that somebody of large fortune will think so; for Sir Edward must marry for money. He and I often talk that matter over. A handsome young man like him will go smirking and smiling about, and paying girls compliments, but he knows he must marry for money. And Sir Edward is a very steady young man, in the main, and has got very good notions.'

"'Sir Edward Denham,' said Charlotte, 'with such personal advantages, may be almost sure of getting a woman of fortune, if he chooses it.'

"This glorious sentiment seemed quite to remove suspicion.

"'Ay, my dear, that is very sensibly said; and if we could but get a young heiress to Sanditon! But heiresses are monstrous scarce! I do not think

we have had an heiress here, nor even a Co., since Sanditon has been a public place. Families come after families, but, as far as I can learn, it is not one in a hundred of them that have any real property, landed or funded. An income, perhaps, but no property. Clergymen, may be, or lawyers from town, or half-pay officers, or widows with only a jointure: and what good can such people do to anybody? Except just as they take our empty houses, and (between ourselves) I think they are great fools for not staying at home. Now, if we could get a young heiress to be sent here for her health, and, as soon as she got well, have her fall in love with Sir Edward! And Miss Esther must marry somebody of fortune too. She must get a rich husband. Ah! young ladies that have no money are very much to be pitied.' After a short pause: 'If Miss Esther thinks to talk me into inviting them to come and stay at Sanditon House, she will find herself mistaken. Matters are altered with me since last summer, you know: I have Miss Clara with me now, which makes a great difference. I should not choose to have my two housemaids' time taken up all the morning in dusting out bedrooms. They have Miss Clara's room to put to rights, as well as mine, every day. If they had hard work, they would want higher wages.'

"Charlotte's feelings were divided between amusement and indignation. She kept her countenance, and kept a civil silence; but without attempting to listen any longer, and only conscious that Lady Denham was still talking in the same

way, allowed her own thoughts to form themselves into such meditation as this: 'She is thoroughly mean; I had no expectation of anything so bad. Mr. Parker spoke too mildly of her. He is too kind-hearted to see clearly, and their very connection misleads him. He has persuaded her to engage in the same speculation, and because they have so far the same object in view, he fancies that she feels like him in other things; but she is very, very mean. I can see no good in her. Poor Miss Brereton! And it makes everybody mean about her. This poor Sir Edward and his sister! how far nature meant them to be respectable I cannot tell; but they are obliged to be mean in their servility to her; and I am mean, too, in giving her my attention with the appearance of coinciding with her. Thus it is when rich people are sordid.'"

Mr. Parker has two unmarried sisters of singular character. They live together: Diana, the younger, always takes the lead, and the elder follows in the same track. It is their pleasure to fancy themselves invalids to a degree and in a manner never experienced by others; but, from a state of exquisite pain and utter prostration, Diana Parker can always rise to be officious in the concerns of all her acquaintance, and to make incredible exertions where they are not wanted.

It would seem that they must be always either very busy for the good of others, or else extremely ill themselves. Some natural delicacy of constitution, in fact, with an unfortunate turn for medicine, especially quack medicine, had given them an early tendency at various times to various

disorders. The rest of their suffering was from their own fancy, the love of distinction, and the love of the wonderful. They had charitable hearts and many amiable feelings; but a spirit of restless activity, and the glory of doing more than anybody else, had a share in every exertion of benevolence, and there was vanity in all they did, as well as in all they endured.

These peculiarities come out in the following letter of Diana Parker to her brother: —

My dear Tom, — We were much grieved at your accident, and if you had not described yourself as having fallen into such very good hands, I should have been with you at all hazards the day after receipt of your letter, though it found me suffering under a more severe attack than usual of my old grievance, spasmodic bile, and hardly able to crawl from my bed to the sofa. But how were you treated? Send me more particulars in your next. If indeed a simple sprain, as you denominate it, nothing would have been so judicious as friction — friction by the hand alone, supposing it could be applied immediately. Two years ago I happened to be calling on Mrs. Sheldon, when her coachman sprained his foot, as he was cleaning the carriage, and could hardly limp into the house; but by the immediate use of friction alone, steadily persevered in (I rubbed his ankle with my own hands for four hours without intermission), he was well in three days. . . . Pray never run into peril again in looking for an apothecary on our account; for had you the most

experienced man in his line settled at Sanditon, it would be no recommendation to us. We have entirely done with the whole medical tribe. We have consulted physician after physician in vain, till we are quite convinced that they can do nothing for us, and that we must trust to our knowledge of our own wretched constitutions for any relief; but if you think it advisable for the interests of the place to get a medical man there, I will undertake the commission with pleasure, and have no doubt of succeeding. I could soon put the necessary irons in the fire. As for getting to Sanditon myself, it is an impossibility. I grieve to say that I cannot attempt it, but my feelings tell me too plainly that in my present state the sea-air would probably be the death of me; and in truth I doubt whether Susan's nerves would be equal to the effort. She has been suffering much from headache, and six leeches a day, for ten days together, relieved her so little that we thought it right to change our measures; and being convinced on examination that much of the evil lay in her gums, I persuaded her to attack the disorder there. She has accordingly had three teeth drawn, and is decidedly better; but her nerves are a good deal deranged, she can only speak in a whisper, and fainted away this morning on poor Arthur's trying to suppress a cough.

Within a week of the date of this letter, in spite of the impossibility of moving, and of the fatal effects to be apprehended from the sea-air, Diana Parker was at Sanditon with her sister. She had

flattered herself that by her own indefatigable exertions, and by setting at work the agency of many friends, she had induced two large families to take houses at Sanditon. It was to expedite these politic views that she came; and though she met with some disappointment of her expectation, yet she did not suffer in health.

Such were some of the *dramatis personæ*, ready dressed and prepared for their parts. They are at least original, and unlike any that the author had produced before. The success of the piece must have depended on the skill with which these parts might be played; but few will be inclined to distrust the skill of one who had so often succeeded. If the author had lived to complete her work, it is probable that these personages might have grown into as mature an individuality of character, and have taken as permanent a place amongst our familiar acquaintance, as Mr. Bennet, or John Thorpe, Mary Musgrove, or Aunt Norris herself.

CHAPTER XIII.

Postscript.

When first I was asked to put together a memoir of my aunt, I saw reasons for declining the attempt. It was not only that, having passed the threescore years and ten usually allotted to man's strength, and being unaccustomed to write for publication, I might well distrust my ability to complete the work, but that I also knew the extreme scantiness of the materials out of which it must be constructed. The grave closed over my aunt fifty-two years ago; and during that long period no idea of writing her life had been entertained by any of her family. Her nearest relatives, far from making provision for such a purpose, had actually destroyed many of the letters and papers by which it might have been facilitated. They were influenced, I believe, partly by an extreme dislike to publishing private details, and partly by never having assumed that the world would take so strong and abiding an interest in her works as to claim her name as public property. It was therefore necessary for me to draw upon recollections rather than on written documents for my materials; while the subject itself supplied me with nothing striking or prominent with which to arrest the attention of

the reader. It has been said that the happiest individuals, like nations during their happiest periods, have no history. In the case of my aunt, it was not only that her course of life was unvaried, but that her own disposition was remarkably calm and even. There was in her nothing eccentric or angular; no ruggedness of temper; no singularity of manner; none of the morbid sensibility or exaggeration of feeling, which not unfrequently accompanies great talents, to be worked up into a picture. Hers was a mind well balanced on a basis of good sense, sweetened by an affectionate heart, and regulated by fixed principles; so that she was to be distinguished from many other amiable and sensible women only by that peculiar genius which shines out clearly enough in her works, but of which a biographer can make little use. The motive which at last induced me to make the attempt is exactly expressed in the passage prefixed to these pages. I thought that I saw something to be done: knew of no one who could do it but myself, and so was driven to the enterprise. I am glad that I have been able to finish my work. As a family record it can scarcely fail to be interesting to those relatives who must ever set a high value on their connection with Jane Austen, and to them I especially dedicate it; but as I have been asked to do so, I also submit it to the censure of the public, with all its faults both of deficiency and redundancy. I know that its value in their eyes must depend, not on any merits of its own, but on the degree of estimation in which

my aunt's works may still be held; and indeed I shall esteem it one of the strongest testimonies ever borne to her talents, if for her sake an interest can be taken in so poor a sketch as I have been able to draw.

LETTERS OF JANE AUSTEN

PREFACE.

The recent cult for Miss Austen, which has resulted in no less than ten new editions of her novels within a decade and three memoirs by different hands within as many years, have made the facts of her life familiar to most readers. It was a short life, and an uneventful one as viewed from the standpoint of our modern times, when steam and electricity have linked together the ends of the earth, and the very air seems teeming with news, agitations, discussions. We have barely time to recover our breath between post and post; and the morning paper with its statements of disaster and its hints of still greater evils to be, is scarcely outlived, when, lo! in comes the evening issue, contradicting the news of the morning, to be sure, but full of omens and auguries of its own to strew our pillows with the seed of wakefulness.

To us, publications come hot and hot from the press. Telegraphic wires like the intricate and incalculable zigzags of the lightning ramify above our heads; and who can tell at what moment their

darts may strike? In Miss Austen's day the tranquil, drowsy, decorous English day of a century since, all was different. News travelled then from hand to hand, carried in creaking post-wagons, or in cases of extreme urgency by men on horseback. When a gentleman journeying in his own "chaise" took three days in going from Exeter to London, a distance now covered in three hours of railroad, there was little chance of frequent surprises. Love, sorrow, and death were in the world then as now, and worked their will upon the sons of men; but people did not expect happenings every day or even every year. No doubt they lived the longer for this exemption from excitement, and kept their nerves in a state of wholesome repair; but it goes without saying that the events of which they knew so little did not stir them deeply.

Miss Austen's life coincided with two of the momentous epochs of history, — the American struggle for independence, and the French Revolution; but there is scarcely an allusion to either in her letters. She was interested in the fleet and its victories because two of her brothers were in the navy and had promotion and prize-money to look forward to. In this connection she mentions Trafalgar and the Egyptian expedition, and generously remarks that she would read Southey's "Life of Nelson" if there was anything in it about her brother Frank! She honors Sir John Moore by

remarking after his death that his mother would perhaps have preferred to have him less distinguished and still alive; further than that, the making of the gooseberry jam and a good recipe for orange wine interests her more than all the marchings and countermarchings, the manœuvres and diplomacies, going on the world over. In the midst of the universal vortex of fear and hope, triumph and defeat, while the fate of Britain and British liberty hung trembling in the balance, she sits writing her letters, trimming her caps, and discussing small beer with her sister in a lively and unruffled fashion wonderful to contemplate. "The society of rural England in those days," as Mr. Goldwin Smith happily puts it, "enjoyed a calm of its own in the midst of the European tempest like the windless centre of a circular storm."

The point of view of a woman with such an environment must naturally be circumscribed and narrow; and in this Miss Austen's charm consists. Seeing little, she painted what she saw with absolute fidelity and a dexterity and perfection unequalled. "On her was bestowed, though in a humble form, the gift which had been bestowed on Homer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Scott, and a few others, — the gift of creative power." Endowed with the keenest and most delicate insight and a vivid sense of humor, she depicted with exactitude what she observed and what she understood, giving

to each fact and emotion its precise shade and value. The things she did not see she did not attempt. Affectation was impossible to her, — most of all, affectation of knowledge or feeling not justly her own. "She held the mirror up to her time" with an exquisite sincerity and fidelity; and the closeness of her study brought her intimately near to those hidden springs which underlie all human nature. This is the reason why, for all their skimp skirts, leg-of-mutton sleeves, and bygone impossible bonnets, her characters do not seem to us old-fashioned. Minds and hearts are made pretty much after the same pattern from century to century; and given a modern dress and speech, Emma or Elizabeth or dear Anne Eliot could enter a drawing-room to-day, and excite no surprise except by so closely resembling the people whom they would find there.

"Miss Austen's novels are dateless things," Mr. Augustine Birrell tells us. "Nobody in his senses would speak of them as 'old novels.' 'John Inglesant' is an old novel, so is 'Ginx's Baby.' But Emma is quite new, and, like a wise woman, affords few clues to her age."

We allude with a special touch of affection to Anne Eliot. "Persuasion," which was written during the last two years of Miss Austen's life, when the refining touch of Eternity was already upon her, has always seemed to us the most perfect of her novels; and Anne, with her exqui-

site breeding and unselfish straightforwardness, just touched with the tender reserve of memory and regret, one of her best portraitures. But this is a matter of individual taste. Doubtless Elizabeth Bennet is "better fun," as the modern girl would say. Miss Austen herself preferred her. She had a droll and pretty way of talking about her characters which showed how real they were to her own mind, and made them equally real to other people. In 1813 she had the good luck to light upon a portrait of Jane Bennet at an exhibition.

"I was very well pleased (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley, excessively like her. I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy. Perhaps I may find her in the great exhibition, which we shall go to if we have time. Mrs. Bingley's is exactly like herself, — size, shaped face, features and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown, with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favorite color with her. I dare say Mrs. D. will be in yellow."

And later: —

"We have been both to the exhibition and Sir J. Reynolds'; and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs. D. at either. I can only imagine that Mr. D. prizes any picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling, — that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy."

The letters included in this series comprise about three quarters of the collection in two volumes published in 1884 by her great-nephew Lord Brabourne. The lightness, almost friskiness, of their tone cannot fail to strike the reader. Modern letters written by women are filled more or less with hints and queries; questionings as to the why and the wherefore occur; allusions to the various "fads" of the day, literary or artistic, — Ibsen, Tolstoi, Browning, Esoteric Buddhism, Wagner's Music, the Mind Cure, Social Science, Causes and Reforms. But Cowper and Crabbe were the poetical sensations in Miss Austen's time, Scott and Byron its phenomenal novelties; it took months to get most books printed, and years to persuade anybody to read them. Furthermore the letters, in all probability, are carefully chosen to reveal only the more superficial side of their writer. There are wide gaps of omission, covering important events such as Mr. Austen's death, the long illness through which Jane nursed her brother Henry, and the anxieties and worries which his failure in business caused to the whole family. What is vouchsafed us is a glimpse of the girlish and untroubled moments of Miss Austen's life; and the glimpse is a sweet and friendly one. We are glad to have it, in spite of our suspicion that another and even more interesting part of her personality is withheld from us.

A good daughter, a delightful sister, the most perfect of aunts, what better record could there be of a single woman? Her literary work never stood in the way of her home duties, any more than her "quiet, limpid, unimpassioned style" stood between her thought and her readers.

Her fame may justly be said to be almost entirely posthumous. She was read and praised to a moderate degree during her lifetime, but all her novels together brought her no more than seven hundred pounds; and her reputation, as it were, was in its close-sheathed bud when, at the early age of forty-one, she died. It would have excited in her an amused incredulity, no doubt, had any one predicted that two generations after her death the real recognition of her powers was to come. Time, which like desert sands has effaced the footprints of so many promising authors, has, with her, served as the desert wind, to blow aside those dusts of the commonplace which for a while concealed her true proportions. She is loved more than she ever hoped to be, and far more widely known. Mrs. Ritchie tells somewhere an anecdote of a party of seven assembled at a dinner-table, where the question arose of the locality of one of Miss Austen's places, — Maple Grove, the residence of Mr. Suckling, if we are not mistaken, — and six of the persons present at once recognized the allusion, and had a formed opinion

on the subject. The seventh was a Frenchman who did not read English!

Scott, Macaulay, Sir James Mackintosh, Miss Martineau, Mrs. Ritchie, Miss Mitford, and a host of others have vied in their generous tributes of admiration. But most striking of all, to our thinking, is that paid to Miss Austen by Lord Tennyson when, in some visit to Lyme not many years since, those with him pointed out this and the other feature of the place only to be interrupted with — "Never mind all that. Show me the exact spot where Louisa Musgrove fell!" Could non-historical verisimilitude go farther or mean more?

S. C. W

Newport, June, 1892.

LETTERS OF JANE AUSTEN.

I.

Steventon, Thursday (January 16, 1796).

I HAVE just received yours and Mary's letter, and I thank you both, though their contents might have been more agreeable. I do not at all expect to see you on Tuesday, since matters have fallen out so unpleasantly; and if you are not able to return till after that day, it will hardly be possible for us to send for you before Saturday, though for my own part I care so little about the ball that it would be no sacrifice to me to give it up for the sake of seeing you two days earlier. We are extremely sorry for poor Eliza's illness. I trust, however, that she has continued to recover since you wrote, and that you will none of you be the worse for your attendance on her. What a good-for-nothing fellow Charles is to bespeak the stockings! I hope he will be too hot all the rest of his life for it!

I sent you a letter yesterday to Ibthorp, which I suppose you will not receive at Kintbury. It was not very long or very witty, and therefore if you never receive it, it does not much signify. I wrote principally to tell you that the Coopers were arrived and in good health. The little boy is very like Dr. Cooper, and the little girl is to resemble Jane, they say.

Our party to Ashe to-morrow night will consist of Edward Cooper, James (for a ball is nothing without him), Buller, who is now staying with us, and I. I look forward with great impatience to it, as I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening. I shall refuse him, however, unless he promises to give away his white coat.

I am very much flattered by your commendation of my last letter, for I write only for fame, and without any view to pecuniary emolument.

Edward is gone to spend the day with his friend, John Lyford, and does not return till to-morrow. Anna is now here; she came up in her chaise to spend the day with her young cousins, but she does not much take to them or to anything about them, except Caroline's spinning-wheel. I am very glad to find from Mary that Mr. and Mrs. Fowle are pleased with you. I hope you will continue to give satisfaction.

How impertinent you are to write to me about

Tom, as if I had not opportunities of hearing from him myself! The last letter that I received from him was dated on Friday, 8th, and he told me that if the wind should be favorable on Sunday, which it proved to be, they were to sail from Falmouth on that day. By this time, therefore, they are at Barbadoes, I suppose. The Rivers are still at Manydown, and are to be at Ashe to-morrow. I intended to call on the Miss Biggs yesterday had the weather been tolerable. Caroline, Anna, and I have just been devouring some cold souse, and it would be difficult to say which enjoyed it most.

Tell Mary that I make over Mr. Heartley and all his estate to her for her sole use and benefit in future, and not only him, but all my other admirers into the bargain wherever she can find them, even the kiss which C. Powlett wanted to give me, as I mean to confine myself in future to Mr. Tom Lefroy, for whom I don't care sixpence. Assure her also, as a last and indubitable proof of Warren's indifference to me, that he actually drew that gentleman's picture for me, and delivered it to me without a sigh.

Friday. — At length the day is come on which I am to flirt my last with Tom Lefroy, and when you receive this it will be over. My tears flow as I write at the melancholy idea. Wm. Chute called here yesterday. I wonder what he means by being so civil. There is a report that Tom is

going to be married to a Lichfield lass. John Lyford and his sister bring Edward home to-day, dine with us, and we shall all go together to Ashe. I understand that we are to draw for partners. I shall be extremely impatient to hear from you again, that I may know how Eliza is, and when you are to return.

With best love, etc., I am affectionately yours,

J. Austen.

Miss Austen,
The Rev. Mr. Fowle's, Kintbury, Newbury

II.

Cork Street, Tuesday morn (August, 1796).

My dear Cassandra, — Here I am once more in this scene of dissipation and vice, and I begin already to find my morals corrupted. We reached Staines yesterday, I do not (know) when, without suffering so much from the heat as I had hoped to do. We set off again this morning at seven o'clock, and had a very pleasant drive, as the morning was cloudy and perfectly cool. I came all the way in the chaise from Hertford Bridge.

Edward [1] and Frank [2] are both gone out to seek their fortunes; the latter is to return soon and

[1] Miss Austen's second brother.

[2] Francis, afterward Sir Francis Austen, Senior Admiral of the Fleet, and K. C. B.

help us seek ours. The former we shall never see again. We are to be at Astley's to-night, which I am glad of. Edward has heard from Henry this morning. He has not been at the races at all, unless his driving Miss Pearson over to Rowling one day can be so called. We shall find him there on Thursday.

I hope you are all alive after our melancholy parting yesterday, and that you pursued your intended avocation with success. God bless you! I must leave off, for we are going out.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

Everybody's love.

III.

Rowling, Monday (September 5).

My dear Cassandra, — I shall be extremely anxious to hear the event of your ball, and shall hope to receive so long and minute an account of every particular that I shall be tired of reading it. Let me know how many, besides their fourteen selves and Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Michael will contrive to place about their coach, and how many of the gentlemen, musicians, and waiters he will have persuaded to come in their shooting-jackets. I hope John Lovett's accident will not prevent his attending the ball, as you will otherwise be

obliged to dance with Mr. Tincton the whole evening. Let me know how J. Harwood deports himself without the Miss Biggs, and which of the Marys will carry the day with my brother James.

We were at a ball on Saturday, I assure you. We dined at Goodnestone, and in the evening danced two country-dances and the Boulangeries. I opened the ball with Edward Bridges; the other couples were Lewis Cage and Harriet, Frank and Louisa, Fanny and George. Elizabeth played one country-dance, Lady Bridges the other, which she made Henry dance with her, and Miss Finch played the Boulangeries.

In reading over the last three or four lines, I am aware of my having expressed myself in so doubtful a manner that if I did not tell you to the contrary, you might imagine it was Lady Bridges who made Henry dance with her at the same time that she was playing, which, if not impossible, must appear a very improbable event to you. But it was Elizabeth who danced. We supped there, and walked home at night under the shade of two umbrellas.

To-day the Goodnestone party begins to disperse and spread itself abroad. Mr. and Mrs. Cage and George repair to Hythe. Lady Waltham, Miss Bridges, and Miss Mary Finch to Dover, for the health of the two former. I have never seen

Marianne at all. On Thursday Mr. and Mrs. Bridges return to Danbury; Miss Harriet Hales accompanies them to London on her way to Dorsetshire.

Farmer Claringbould died this morning, and I fancy Edward means to get some of his farm, if he can cheat Sir Brook enough in the agreement.

We have just got some venison from Godmersham, which the two Mr. Harveys are to dine on to-morrow, and on Friday or Saturday the Goodnestone people are to finish their scraps. Henry went away on Friday, as he purposed, *without fayl.* You will hear from him soon, I imagine, as he talked of writing to Steventon shortly. Mr. Richard Harvey is going to be married; but as it is a great secret, and only known to half the neighborhood, you must not mention it. The lady's name is Musgrave.

I am in great distress. I cannot determine whether I shall give Richis half a guinea or only five shillings when I go away. Counsel me, amiable Miss Austen, and tell me which will be the most.

We walked Frank last night to Crixhall Ruff, and he appeared much edified. Little Edward was breeched yesterday for good and all, and was whipped into the bargain.

Pray remember me to everybody who does not inquire after me; those who do, remember me

without bidding. Give my love to Mary Harrison, and tell her I wish, whenever she is attached to a young man, some respectable Dr. Marchmont may keep them apart for five volumes. . . .

IV.

Rowling, Thursday (September 15).

My dear Cassandra,— We have been very gay since I wrote last; dining at Nackington, returning by moonlight, and everything quite in style, not to mention Mr. Claringbould's funeral which we saw go by on Sunday. I believe I told you in a former letter that Edward had some idea of taking the name of Claringbould; but that scheme is over, though it would be a very eligible as well as a very pleasant plan, would any one advance him money enough to begin on. We rather expected Mr. Milles to have done so on Tuesday; but to our great surprise nothing was said on the subject, and unless it is in your power to assist your brother with five or six hundred pounds, he must entirely give up the idea.

At Nackington we met Lady Sondes' picture over the mantelpiece in the dining-room, and the pictures of her three children in an ante-room, besides Mr. Scott, Miss Fletcher, Mr. Toke, Mr. J. Toke, and the archdeacon Lynch. Miss Fletcher and I were very thick, but I am the thinnest of

the two. She wore her purple muslin, which is pretty enough, though it does not become her complexion. There are two traits in her character which are pleasing, — namely, she admires Camilla, and drinks no cream in her tea. If you should ever see Lucy, you may tell her that I scolded Miss Fletcher for her negligence in writing, as she desired me to do, but without being able to bring her to any proper sense of shame, — that Miss Fletcher says, in her defence, that as everybody whom Lucy knew when she was in Canterbury has now left it, she has nothing at all to write to her about. By *everybody*, I suppose Miss Fletcher means that a new set of officers have arrived there. But this is a note of my own.

Mrs. Milles, Mr. John Toke, and in short everybody of any sensibility inquired in tender strains after you, and I took an opportunity of assuring Mr. J. T. that neither he nor his father need longer keep themselves single for you.

We went in our two carriages to Nackington; but how we divided I shall leave you to surmise, merely observing that as Elizabeth and I were without either hat or bonnet, it would not have been very convenient for us to go in the chaise. We went by Bifrons, and I contemplated with a melancholy pleasure the abode of him on whom I once fondly doated. We dine to-day at Good-

nestone, to meet my aunt Fielding from Margate and a Mr. Clayton, her professed admirer — at least, so I imagine. Lady Bridges has received very good accounts of Marianne, who is already certainly the better for her bathing.

So His Royal Highness Sir Thomas Williams has at length sailed; the papers say "on a cruise." But I hope they are gone to Cork, or I shall have written in vain. Give my love to Jane, as she arrived at Steventon yesterday, I dare say.

I sent a message to Mr. Digweed from Edward in a letter to Mary Lloyd which she ought to receive to-day; but as I know that the Harwoods are not very exact as to their letters, I may as well repeat it to you. Mr. Digweed is to be informed that illness has prevented Seward's coming over to look at the repairs intended at the farm, but that he will come as soon as he can. Mr. Digweed may also be informed, if you think proper, that Mr. and Mrs. Milles are to dine here to-morrow, and that Mrs. Joan Knatchbull is to be asked to meet them. Mr. Richard Harvey's match is put off till he has got a better Christian name, of which he has great hopes.

Mr. Children's two sons are both going to be married, John and George. They are to have one wife between them, a Miss Holwell, who belongs to the Black Hole at Calcutta. I depend on hearing from James very soon; he promised me an

account of the ball, and by this time he must have collected his ideas enough after the fatigue of dancing to give me one.

Edward and Fly went out yesterday very early in a couple of shooting jackets, and came home like a couple of bad shots, for they killed nothing at all. They are out again to-day, and are not yet returned. Delightful sport! They are just come home, Edward with his two brace, Frank with his two and a half. What amiable young men!

Friday. — Your letter and one from Henry are just come, and the contents of both accord with my scheme more than I had dared expect. In one particular I could wish it otherwise, for Henry is very indifferent indeed. You must not expect us quite so early, however, as Wednesday, the 20th, — on that day se'nnight, according to our present plan, we may be with you. Frank had never any idea of going away before Monday, the 26th. I shall write to Miss Mason immediately, and press her returning with us, which Henry thinks very likely, and particularly eligible.

Buy Mary Harrison's gown by all means. You shall have mine for ever so much money, though, if I am tolerably rich when I get home, I shall like it very much myself.

As to the mode of our travelling to town, *I* want to go in a stage-coach, but Frank will not let

me. As you are likely to have the Williams and Lloyds with you next week, you would hardly find room for us then. If any one wants anything in town, they must send their commissions to Frank, as *I* shall merely pass through it. The tallow-chandler is Penlington, at the Crown and Beehive, Charles Street, Covent Garden.

Miss Austen, Steventon, Overton, Hants.

V.

Rowling, Sunday (September 18).

My dear Cassandra, — This morning has been spent in doubt and deliberation, in forming plans and removing difficulties, for it ushered in the day with an event which I had not intended should take place so soon by a week. Frank has received his appointment on board the "Captain John Gore," commanded by the "Triton," and will therefore be obliged to be in town on Wednesday; and though I have every disposition in the world to accompany him on that day, I cannot go on the uncertainty of the Pearsons being at home, as I should not have a place to go to in case they were from home.

I wrote to Miss P. on Friday, and hoped to receive an answer from her this morning, which would have rendered everything smooth and easy, and would have enabled us to leave this place to-

morrow, as Frank, on first receiving his appointment, intended to do. He remains till Wednesday merely to accommodate me. I have written to her again to-day, and desired her to answer it by return of post. On Tuesday, therefore, I shall positively know whether they can receive me on Wednesday. If they cannot, Edward has been so good as to promise to take me to Greenwich on the Monday following, which was the day before fixed on, if that suits them better. If I have no answer at all on Tuesday, I must suppose Mary is not at home, and must wait till I do hear, as after having invited her to go to Steventon with me, it will not quite do to go home and say no more about it.

My father will be so good as to fetch home his prodigal daughter from town, I hope, unless he wishes me to walk the hospitals, enter at the Temple, or mount guard at St. James'. It will hardly be in Frank's power to take me home, — nay, it certainly will not. I shall write again as soon as I get to Greenwich.

What dreadful hot weather we have! It keeps one in a continual state of inelegance.

If Miss Pearson should return with me, pray be careful not to expect too much beauty. I will not pretend to say that on a first view she quite answered the opinion I had formed of her. My mother, I am sure, will be disappointed if she does

not take great care. From what I remember of her picture, it is no great resemblance.

I am very glad that the idea of returning with Frank occurred to me; for as to Henry's coming into Kent again, the time of its taking place is so very uncertain that I should be waiting for dead men's shoes. I had once determined to go with Frank to-morrow and take my chance, etc., but they dissuaded me from so rash a step as I really think on consideration it would have been; for if the Pearsons were not at home, I should inevitably fall a sacrifice to the arts of some fat woman who would make me drunk with small beer.

Mary is brought to bed of a boy, — both doing very well. I shall leave you to guess what Mary I mean. Adieu, with best love to all your agreeable inmates. Don't let the Lloyds go on any account before I return, unless Miss P. is of the party. How ill I have written! I begin to hate myself.

Yours ever,

J. Austen.

The "Triton" is a new 32 frigate just launched at Deptford. Frank is much pleased with the prospect of having Captain Gore under his command.

Miss Austen, Steventon, Overton, Hants.

VI.

"Bull and George," Dartford,
Wednesday (October 24, 1798).

My dear Cassandra, — You have already heard from Daniel, I conclude, in what excellent time we reached and quitted Sittingbourne, and how very well my mother bore her journey thither. I am now able to send you a continuation of the same good account of her. She was very little fatigued on her arrival at this place, has been refreshed by a comfortable dinner, and now seems quite stout. It wanted five minutes of twelve when we left Sittingbourne, from whence we had a famous pair of horses, which took us to Rochester in an hour and a quarter; the postboy seemed determined to show my mother that Kentish drivers were not always tedious, and really drove as fast as Cax.

Our next stage was not quite so expeditiously performed; the road was heavy, and our horses very indifferent. However, we were in such good time and my mother bore her journey so well, that expedition was of little importance to us; and as it was, we were very little more than two hours and a half coming hither, and it was scarcely past four when we stopped at the inn. My mother took some of her bitters at Ospringe, and some

more at Rochester, and she ate some bread several times.

We have got apartments up two pair of stairs, as we could not be otherwise accommodated with a sitting-room and bed-chambers on the same floor which we wished to be. We have one double-bedded and one single-bedded room; in the former my mother and I are to sleep. I shall leave you to guess who is to occupy the other. We sate down to dinner a little after five, and had some beef-steaks and a boiled fowl, but no oyster sauce.

I should have begun my letter soon after our arrival, but for a little adventure which prevented me. After we had been here a quarter of an hour it was discovered that my writing and dressing boxes had been by accident put into a chaise which was just packing off as we came in, and were driven away toward Gravesend in their way to the West Indies. No part of my property could have been such a prize before, for in my writing-box was all my worldly wealth, 7*l.*, and my dear Harry's deputation. Mr. Nottley immediately despatched a man and horse after the chaise, and in half an hour's time I had the pleasure of being as rich as ever; they were got about two or three miles off.

My day's journey has been pleasanter in every respect than I expected. I have been very little crowded and by no means unhappy. Your watch-

fulness with regard to the weather on our accounts was very kind and very effectual. We had one heavy shower on leaving Sittingbourne, but afterwards the clouds cleared away, and we had a very bright *chrystal* afternoon.

My father is now reading the "Midnight Bell," which he has got from the library, and mother sitting by the fire. Our route to-morrow is not determined. We have none of us much inclination for London, and if Mr. Nottley will give us leave, I think we shall go to Staines through Croydon and Kingston, which will be much pleasanter than any other way; but he is decidedly for Clapham and Battersea. God bless you all!

Yours affectionately, J. A.

I flatter myself that *itty Dordy* will not forget me at least under a week. Kiss him for me.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

VII.

Steventon, Saturday (October 27).

My dear Cassandra, — Your letter was a most agreeable surprise to me to-day, and I have taken a long sheet of paper to show my gratitude.

We arrived here yesterday between four and five, but I cannot send you quite so triumphant an account of our last day's journey as of the first

and second. Soon after I had finished my letter from Staines, my mother began to suffer from the exercise or fatigue of travelling, and she was a good deal indisposed. She had not a very good night at Staines, but bore her journey better than I had expected, and at Basingstoke, where we stopped more than half an hour, received much comfort from a mess of broth and the sight of Mr. Lyford, who recommended her to take twelve drops of laudanum when she went to bed as a composer, which she accordingly did.

James called on us just as we were going to tea, and my mother was well enough to talk very cheerfully to him before she went to bed. James seems to have taken to his old trick of coming to Steventon in spite of Mary's reproaches, for he was here before breakfast and is now paying us a second visit. They were to have dined here to-day, but the weather is too bad. I have had the pleasure of hearing that Martha is with them. James fetched her from Ibthorp on Thursday, and she will stay with them till she removes to Kintbury.

We met with no adventures at all in our journey yesterday, except that our trunk had once nearly slipped off, and we were obliged to stop at Hartley to have our wheels greased.

Whilst my mother and Mr. Lyford were together I went to Mrs. Ryder's and bought what I intended to buy, but not in much perfection. There were

no narrow braces for children, and scarcely any notting silk; but Miss Wood, as usual, is going to town very soon, and will lay in a fresh stock. I gave 2*s.* 3*d.* a yard for my flannel, and I fancy it is not very good, but it is so disgraceful and contemptible an article in itself that its being comparatively good or bad is of little importance. I bought some Japan ink likewise, and next week shall begin my operations on my hat, on which you know my principal hopes of happiness depend.

I am very grand indeed; I had the dignity of dropping out my mother's laudanum last night. I carry about the keys of the wine and closet, and twice since I began this letter have had orders to give in the kitchen. Our dinner was very good yesterday, and the chicken boiled perfectly tender; therefore I shall not be obliged to dismiss Nanny on that account.

Almost everything was unpacked and put away last night. Nanny chose to do it, and I was not sorry to be busy. I have unpacked the gloves, and placed yours in your drawer. Their color is light and pretty, and I believe exactly what we fixed on.

Your letter was chaperoned here by one from Mrs. Cooke, in which she says that "Battleridge" is not to come out before January, and she is so little satisfied with Cawthorn's dilatoriness that she never means to employ him again.

Mrs. Hall, of Sherborne, was brought to bed

yesterday of a dead child, some weeks before she expected, owing to a fright. I suppose she happened unawares to look at her husband.

There has been a great deal of rain here for this last fortnight, much more than in Kent, and indeed we found the roads all the way from Staines most disgracefully dirty. Steventon lane has its full share of it, and I don't know when I shall be able to get to Deane.

I hear that Martha is in better looks and spirits than she has enjoyed for a long time, and I flatter myself she will now be able to jest openly about Mr. W.

The spectacles which Molly found are my mother's, the scissors my father's. We are very glad to hear such a good account of your patients, little and great. My dear itty Dordy's remembrance of me is very pleasing to me, — foolishly pleasing, because I know it will be over so soon. My attachment to him will be more durable. I shall think with tenderness and delight on his beautiful and smiling countenance and interesting manner until a few years have turned him into an ungovernable, ungracious fellow.

The books from Winton are all unpacked and put away; the binding has compressed them most conveniently, and there is now very good room in the bookcase for all that we wish to have there. I believe the servants were very glad to see us.

Nanny was, I am sure. She confesses that it was very dull, and yet she had her child with her till last Sunday. I understand that there are some grapes left, but I believe not many; they must be gathered as soon as possible, or this rain will entirely rot them.

I am quite angry with myself for not writing closer; why is my alphabet so much more sprawly than yours? Dame Tilbury's daughter has lain in. Shall I give her any of your baby clothes? The laceman was here only a few days ago. How unfortunate for both of us that he came so soon! Dame Bushell washes for us only one week more, as Sukey has got a place. John Steevens' wife undertakes our purification. She does not look as if anything she touched would ever be clean, but who knows? We do not seem likely to have any other maidservant at present, but Dame Staples will supply the place of one. Mary has hired a young girl from Ashe who has never been out to service to be her scrub, but James fears her not being strong enough for the place.

Earle Harwood has been to Deane lately, as I think Mary wrote us word, and his family then told him that they would receive his wife, if she continued to behave well for another year. He was very grateful, as well he might; their behavior throughout the whole affair has been particularly kind. Earle and his wife live in the most private manner imaginable at Portsmouth, without keeping

a servant of any kind. What a prodigious innate love of virtue she must have, to marry under such circumstances!

It is now Saturday evening, but I wrote the chief of this in the morning. My mother has not been down at all to-day; the laudanum made her sleep a good deal, and upon the whole I think she is better. My father and I dined by ourselves. How strange! He and John Bond are now very happy together, for I have just heard the heavy step of the latter along the passage.

James Digweed called to-day, and I gave him his brother's deputation. Charles Harwood, too, has just called to ask how we are, in his way from Dummer, whither he has been conveying Miss Garrett, who is going to return to her former residence in Kent. I will leave off, or I shall not have room to add a word to-morrow.

Sunday. — My mother has had a very good night, and feels much better to-day.

I have received my aunt's letter, and thank you for your scrap. I will write to Charles soon. Pray give Fanny and Edward a kiss from me, and ask George if he has got a new song for me. 'T is really very kind of my aunt to ask us to Bath again; a kindness that deserves a better return than to profit by it.

Yours ever, **J. A.**

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

VIII.

STEVENTON, December 1.

MY DEAR CASSANDRA,—I am so good as to write to you again thus speedily, to let you know that I have just heard from Frank. He was at Cadiz, alive and well, on October 19, and had then very lately received a letter from you, written as long ago as when the "London" was at St. Helen's. But his *raly* latest intelligence of us was in one from me of September 1, which I sent soon after we got to Godmersham. He had written a packet full for his dearest friends in England, early in October, to go by the "Excellent;" but the "Excellent" was not sailed, nor likely to sail, when he despatched this to me. It comprehended letters for both of us, for Lord Spencer, Mr. Daysh, and the East India Directors. Lord St. Vincent had left the fleet when he wrote, and was gone to Gibraltar, it was said to superintend the fitting out of a private expedition from thence against some of the enemies' ports; Minorca or Malta were conjectured to be the objects.

Frank writes in good spirits, but says that our correspondence cannot be so easily carried on in future as it has been, as the communication between Cadiz and Lisbon is less frequent than formerly. You and my mother, therefore, must

not alarm yourselves at the long intervals that may divide his letters. I address this advice to you two as being the most tender-hearted of the family.

My mother made her *entrée* into the dressing-room through crowds of admiring spectators yesterday afternoon, and we all drank tea together for the first time these five weeks. She has had a tolerable night, and bids fair for a continuance in the same brilliant course of action to-day. . . .

Mr. Lyford was here yesterday; he came while we were at dinner, and partook of our elegant entertainment. I was not ashamed at asking him to sit down to table, for we had some pease-soup, a sparerib, and a pudding. He wants my mother to look yellow and to throw out a rash, but she will do neither.

I was at Deane yesterday morning. Mary was very well, but does not gain bodily strength very fast. When I saw her so stout on the third and sixth days, I expected to have seen her as well as ever by the end of a fortnight.

James went to Ibthorp yesterday to see his mother and child. Letty is with Mary [1] at present, of course exceedingly happy, and in raptures with the child. Mary does not manage matters in such a way as to make me want to lay in myself. She is not tidy enough in her appearance; she has no

[1] Mrs. James Austen.

dressing-gown to sit up in; her curtains are all too thin, and things are not in that comfort and style about her which are necessary to make such a situation an enviable one. Elizabeth was really a pretty object with her nice clean cap put on so tidily and her dress so uniformly white and orderly. We live entirely in the dressing-room now, which I like very much; I always feel so much more elegant in it than in the parlor.

No news from Kintbury yet. Eliza sports with our impatience. She was very well last Thursday. Who is Miss Maria Montresor going to marry, and what is to become of Miss Mulcaster?

I find great comfort in my stuff gown, but I hope you do not wear yours too often. I have made myself two or three caps to wear of evenings since I came home, and they save me a world of torment as to hairdressing, which at present gives me no trouble beyond washing and brushing, for my long hair is always plaited up out of sight, and my short hair curls well enough to want no papering. I have had it cut lately by Mr. Butler.

There is no reason to suppose that Miss Morgan is dead after all. Mr. Lyford gratified us very much yesterday by his praises of my father's mutton, which they all think the finest that was ever ate. John Bond begins to find himself grow old, which John Bonds ought not to do, and unequal to much hard work; a man is therefore

hired to supply his place as to labor, and John himself is to have the care of the sheep. There are not more people engaged than before, I believe; only men instead of boys. I fancy so at least, but you know my stupidity as to such matters. Lizzie Bond is just apprenticed to Miss Small, so we may hope to see her able to spoil gowns in a few years.

My father has applied to Mr. May for an alehouse for Robert, at his request, and to Mr. Deane, of Winchester, likewise. This was my mother's idea, who thought he would be proud to oblige a relation of Edward in return for Edward's accepting his money. He sent a very civil answer indeed, but has no house vacant at present. May expects to have an empty one soon at Farnham, so perhaps Nanny may have the honor of drawing ale for the Bishop. I shall write to Frank to-morrow.

Charles Powlett gave a dance on Thursday, to the great disturbance of all his neighbors, of course, who, you know, take a most lively interest in the state of his finances, and live in hopes of his being soon ruined.

We are very much disposed to like our new maid; she knows nothing of a dairy, to be sure, which, in our family, is rather against her, but she is to be taught it all. In short, we have felt the inconvenience of being without a maid so long, that we are determined to like her, and she will

find it a hard matter to displease us. As yet, she seems to cook very well, is uncommonly stout, and says she can work well at her needle.

Sunday. — My father is glad to hear so good an account of Edward's pigs, and desires he may be told, as encouragement to his taste for them, that Lord Bolton is particularly curious in *his* pigs, has had pigstyes of a most elegant construction built for them, and visits them every morning as soon as he rises.

Affectionately yours,

J. A.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

IX.

Steventon, Tuesday (December 18).

My dear Cassandra, — Your letter came quite as soon as I expected, and so your letters will always do, because I have made it a rule not to expect them till they come, in which I think I consult the ease of us both.

It is a great satisfaction to us to hear that your business is in a way to be settled, and so settled as to give you as little inconvenience as possible. You are very welcome to my father's name and to his services if they are ever required in it. I shall keep my ten pounds too, to wrap myself up in next winter.

I took the liberty a few days ago of asking your black velvet bonnet to lend me its cawl, which it very readily did, and by which I have been enabled to give a considerable improvement of dignity to cap, which was before too *nidgetty* to please me. I shall wear it on Thursday, but I hope you will not be offended with me for following your advice as to its ornaments only in part. I still venture to retain the narrow silver round it, put twice round without any bow, and instead of the black military feather shall put in the coquelicot one as being smarter, and besides coquelicot is to be all the fashion this winter. After the ball I shall probably make it entirely black.

I am sorry that our dear Charles begins to feel the dignity of ill-usage. My father will write to Admiral Gambier. He must have already received so much satisfaction from his acquaintance and patronage of Frank, that he will be delighted, I dare say, to have another of the family introduced to him. I think it would be very right in Charles to address Sir Thomas on the occasion, though I cannot approve of your scheme of writing to him (which you communicated to me a few nights ago) to request him to come home and convey you to Steventon. To do you justice, however, you had some doubts of the propriety of such a measure yourself.

I am very much obliged to my dear little George

for his message, — for his love at least; his duty, I suppose, was only in consequence of some hint of my favorable intentions towards him from his father or mother. I am sincerely rejoiced, however, that I ever was born, since it has been the means of procuring him a dish of tea. Give my best love to him. . . .

Wednesday. — I have changed my mind, and changed the trimmings of my cap this morning; they are now such as you suggested. I felt as if I should not prosper if I strayed from your directions, and I think it makes me look more like Lady Conyngham now than it did before, which is all that one lives for now. I believe I *shall* make my new gown like my robe, but the back of the latter is all in a piece with the tail, and will seven yards enable me to copy it in that respect? . . .

I have just heard from Martha and Frank: his letter was written on November 12. All well and nothing particular. J. A.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

X.

Steventon, Monday night (December 24).

My dear Cassandra, — I have got some pleasant news for you which I am eager to communicate, and therefore begin my letter sooner, though I shall not send it sooner than usual.

Admiral Gambier, in reply to my father's application, writes as follows: "As it is usual to keep young officers in small vessels, it being most proper on account of their inexperience, and it being also a situation where they are more in the way of learning their duty, your son has been continued in the 'Scorpion;' but I have mentioned to the Board of Admiralty his wish to be in a frigate, and when a proper opportunity offers and it is judged that he has taken his turn in a small ship, I hope he will be removed. With regard to your son now in the 'London' I am glad I can give you the assurance that his promotion is likely to take place very soon, as Lord Spencer has been so good as to say he would include him in an arrangement that he proposes making in a short time relative to some promotions in that quarter."

There! I may now finish my letter and go and hang myself, for I am sure I can neither write nor do anything which will not appear insipid to you after this. *Now* I really think he will soon be made, and only wish we could communicate our foreknowledge of the event to him whom it principally concerns. My father has written to Daysh to desire that he will inform us, if he can, when the commission is sent. Your chief wish is now ready to be accomplished; and could Lord Spencer give happiness to Martha at the same time, what a joyful heart he would make of yours!

I have sent the same extract of the sweets of Gambier to Charles, who, poor fellow, though he sinks into nothing but an humble attendant on the hero of the piece, will, I hope, be contented with the prospect held out to him. By what the Admiral says, it appears as if he had been designedly kept in the "Scorpion." But I will not torment myself with conjectures and suppositions; facts shall satisfy me.

Frank had not heard from any of us for ten weeks when he wrote to me on November 12 in consequence of Lord St. Vincent being removed to Gibraltar. When his commission is sent, however, it will not be so long on its road as our letters, because all the Government despatches are forwarded by land to his lordship from Lisbon with great regularity.

I returned from Manydown this morning, and found my mother certainly in no respect worse than when I left her. She does not like the cold weather, but that we cannot help. I spent my time very quietly and very pleasantly with Catherine. Miss Blackford is agreeable enough. I do not want people to be very agreeable, as it saves me the trouble of liking them a great deal. I found only Catherine and her when I got to Manydown on Thursday. We dined together, and went together to Worting to seek the protection of Mrs. Clarke, with whom were Lady Mildmay, her eldest son, and Mr. and Mrs. Hoare.

Our ball was very thin, but by no means unpleasant. There were thirty-one people, and only eleven ladies out of the number, and but five single women in the room. Of the gentlemen present you may have some idea from the list of my partners, — Mr. Wood, G. Lefroy, Rice, a Mr. Butcher (belonging to the Temples, a sailor and not of the 11th Light Dragoons), Mr. Temple (not the horrid one of all), Mr. Wm. Orde (cousin to the Kingsclere man), Mr. John Harwood, and Mr. Calland, who appeared as usual with his hat in his hand, and stood every now and then behind Catherine and me to be talked to and abused for not dancing. We teased him, however, into it at last. I was very glad to see him again after so long a separation, and he was altogether rather the genius and flirt of the evening. He inquired after you.

There were twenty dances, and I danced them all, and without any fatigue. I was glad to find myself capable of dancing so much, and with so much satisfaction as I did; from my slender enjoyment of the Ashford balls (as assemblies for dancing) I had not thought myself equal to it, but in cold weather and with few couples I fancy I could just as well dance for a week together as for half an hour. My black cap was openly admired by Mrs. Lefroy, and secretly I imagine by everybody else in the room. . . .

Poor Edward! It is very hard that he, who has everything else in the world that he can wish for, should not have good health too. But I hope with the assistance of stomach complaints, faintnesses, and sicknesses, he will soon be restored to that blessing likewise. If his nervous complaint proceeded from a suppression of something that ought to be thrown out, which does not seem unlikely, the first of these disorders may really be a remedy, and I sincerely wish it may, for I know no one more deserving of happiness without alloy than Edward is. . . .

The Lords of the Admiralty will have enough of our applications at present, for I hear from Charles that he has written to Lord Spencer himself to be removed. I am afraid his Serene Highness will be in a passion, and order some of our heads to be cut off. . . .

You deserve a longer letter than this; but it is my unhappy fate seldom to treat people so well as they deserve. . . . God bless you!

Yours affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

Wednesday. — The snow came to nothing yesterday, so I did go to Deane, and returned home at nine o'clock at night in the little carriage, and without being very cold.

Miss AUSTEN,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XI.

Steventon, Friday (December 28).

My dear Cassandra, — Frank is made. He was yesterday raised to the rank of Commander, and appointed to the "Petterel" sloop, now at Gibraltar. A letter from Daysh has just announced this, and as it is confirmed by a very friendly one from Mr. Mathew to the same effect, transcribing one from Admiral Gambier to the General, we have no reason to suspect the truth of it.

As soon as you have cried a little for joy, you may go on, and learn further that the India House have taken *Captain Austen's* petition into consideration, — this comes from Daysh, — and likewise that Lieutenant Charles John Austen is removed to the "Tamar" frigate, — this comes from the Admiral. We cannot find out where the "Tamar" is, but I hope we shall now see Charles here at all events.

This letter is to be dedicated entirely to good news. If you will send my father an account of your washing and letter expenses, etc., he will send you a draft for the amount of it, as well as for your next quarter, and for Edward's rent. If you don't buy a muslin gown now on the strength of this money and Frank's promotion, I shall never forgive you.

Mrs. Lefroy has just sent me word that Lady Dorchester meant to invite me to her ball on January 8, which, though an humble blessing compared with what the last page records, I do not consider as any calamity.

I cannot write any more now, but I have written enough to make you very happy, and therefore may safely conclude.

Yours affectionately, JANE.

Miss AUSTEN, Godmersham Park.

XII.

STEVENTON, Tuesday (January 8, 1799).

MY DEAR CASSANDRA, — You must read your letters over *five* times in future before you send them, and then, perhaps, you may find them as entertaining as I do. I laughed at several parts of the one which I am now answering.

Charles is not come yet, but he must come this morning, or he shall never know what I will do to him. The ball at Kempshott is this evening, and I have got him an invitation, though I have not been so considerate as to get him a partner. But the cases are different between him and Eliza Bailey, for he is not in a dying way, and may therefore be equal to getting a partner for himself. I believe I told you that Monday was to be the ball night, for which, and for all other errors into

which I may ever have led you, I humbly ask your pardon.

Elizabeth is very cruel about my writing music, and, as a punishment for her, I should insist upon always writing out all hers for her in future, if I were not punishing myself at the same time.

I am tolerably glad to hear that Edward's income is so good a one, — as glad as I can be at anybody's being rich except you and me, — and I am thoroughly rejoiced to hear of his present to you.

I am not to wear my white satin cap to-night, after all; I am to wear a mamalone cap instead, which Charles Fowle sent to Mary, and which she lends me. It is all the fashion now; worn at the opera, and by Lady Mildmays at Hackwood balls. I hate describing such things, and I dare say you will be able to guess what it is like. I have got over the dreadful epocha of mantua-making much better than I expected. My gown is made very much like my blue one, which you always told me sat very well, with only these variations: the sleeves are short, the wrap fuller, the apron comes over it, and a band of the same completes the whole.

I assure you that I dread the idea of going to Brighton as much as you do, but I am not without hopes that something may happen to prevent it.

F—— has lost his election at B——, and per-

haps they may not be able to see company for some time. They talk of going to Bath, too, in the spring, and perhaps they may be overturned in their way down, and all laid up for the summer.

Wednesday. — I have had a cold and weakness in one of my eyes for some days, which makes writing neither very pleasant nor very profitable, and which will probably prevent my finishing this letter myself. My mother has undertaken to do it for me, and I shall leave the Kempshott ball for her.

You express so little anxiety about my being murdered under Ash Park Copse by Mrs. Hulbert's servant, that I have a great mind not to tell you whether I was or not, and shall only say that I did not return home that night or the next, as Martha kindly made room for me in her bed, which was the shut-up one in the new nursery. Nurse and the child slept upon the floor, and there we all were in some confusion and great comfort The bed did exceedingly well for us, both to lie awake in and talk till two o'clock, and to sleep in the rest of the night. I love Martha better than ever, and I mean to go and see her, if I can, when she gets home. We all dined at the Harwoods' on Thursday, and the party broke up the next morning.

This complaint in my eye has been a sad bore to me, for I have not been able to read or work in any comfort since Friday; but one advantage will

be derived from it, for I shall be such a proficient in music by the time I have got rid of my cold, that I shall be perfectly qualified in that science at least to take Mr. Roope's office at Eastwell next summer; and I am sure of Elizabeth's recommendation, be it only on Harriet's account. Of my talent in drawing I have given specimens in my letters to you, and I have nothing to do but to invent a few hard names for the stars.

Mary grows rather more reasonable about her child's beauty, and says that she does not think him really handsome; but I suspect her moderation to be something like that of W—— W——'s mamma. Perhaps Mary has told you that they are going to enter more into dinner-parties; the Biggs and Mr. Holder dine there to-morrow, and I am to meet them. I shall sleep there. Catherine has the honor of giving her name to a set, which will be composed of two Withers, two Heathcotes, a Blackford, and no Bigg except herself. She congratulated me last night on Frank's promotion, as if she really felt the joy she talked of.

My sweet little George! I am delighted to hear that he has such an inventive genius as to face-making. I admired his yellow wafer very much, and hope he will choose the wafer for your next letter. I wore my green shoes last night, and took my white fan with me; I am very glad he never threw it into the river.

Mrs. Knight giving up the Godmersham estate to Edward was no such prodigious act of generosity after all, it seems, for she has reserved herself an income out of it still; this ought to be known, that her conduct may not be overrated. I rather think Edward shows the most magnanimity of the two, in accepting her resignation with such incumbrances.

The more I write, the better my eye gets; so I shall at least keep on till it is quite well, before I give up my pen to my mother.

Mrs. Bramston's little movable apartment was tolerably filled last night by herself, Mrs. H. Blackstone, her two daughters, and me. I do not like the Miss Blackstones; indeed, I was always determined not to like them, so there is the less merit in it. Mrs. Bramston was very civil, kind, and noisy. I spent a very pleasant evening, chiefly among the Manydown party. There was the same kind of supper as last year, and the same want of chairs. There were more dancers than the room could conveniently hold, which is enough to constitute a good ball at any time.

I do not think I was very much in request. People were rather apt not to ask me till they could not help it; one's consequence, you know, varies so much at times without any particular reason. There was one gentleman, an officer of the Cheshire, a very good-looking young man, who, I was told, wanted very much to be intro-

duced to me; but as he did not want it quite enough to take much trouble in effecting it, we never could bring it about.

I danced with Mr. John Wood again, twice with a Mr. South, a lad from Winchester, who, I suppose, is as far from being related to the bishop of that diocese as it is possible to be, with G. Lefroy, and J. Harwood, who, I think, takes to me rather more than he used to do. One of my gayest actions was sitting down two dances in preference to having Lord Bolton's eldest son for my partner, who danced too ill to be endured. The Miss Charterises were there, and played the parts of the Miss Edens with great spirit. Charles never came. Naughty Charles! I suppose he could not get superseded in time.

Miss Debary has replaced your two sheets of drawing-paper with two of superior size and quality; so I do not grudge her having taken them at all now. Mr. Ludlow and Miss Pugh of Andover are lately married, and so is Mrs. Skeete of Basingstoke, and Mr. French, chemist, of Reading.

I do not wonder at your wanting to read "First Impressions" again, so seldom as you have gone through it, and that so long ago. I am much obliged to you for meaning to leave my old petticoat behind you. I have long secretly wished it might be done, but had not courage to make the request.

Pray mention the name of Maria Montresor's lover when you write next. My mother wants to know it, and I have not courage to look back into your letters to find it out.

I shall not be able to send this till to-morrow, and you will be disappointed on Friday; I am very sorry for it, but I cannot help it.

The partnership between Jeffereys, Toomer, and Legge is dissolved; the two latter are melted away into nothing, and it is to be hoped that Jeffereys will soon break, for the sake of a few heroines whose money he may have. I wish you joy of your birthday twenty times over.

I shall be able to send this to the post to-day, which exalts me to the utmost pinnacle of human felicity, and makes me bask in the sunshine of prosperity or gives me any other sensation of pleasure in studied language which you may prefer. Do not be angry with me for not filling my sheet, and believe me yours affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

XIII.

Steventon, Monday (January 21).

My dear Cassandra, — I will endeavor to make this letter more worthy your acceptance than my last, which was so shabby a one that I think Mr. Marshall could never charge you with

the postage. My eyes have been very indifferent since it was written, but are now getting better once more; keeping them so many hours open on Thursday night, as well as the dust of the ball-room, injured them a good deal. I use them as little as I can, but you know, and Elizabeth knows, and everybody who ever had weak eyes knows, how delightful it is to hurt them by employment, against the advice and entreaty of all one's friends.

Charles leaves us to-night. The "Tamar" is in the Downs, and Mr. Daysh advises him to join her there directly, as there is no chance of her going to the westward. Charles does not approve of this at all, and will not be much grieved if he should be too late for her before she sails, as he may then hope to get into a better station. He attempted to go to town last night, and got as far on his road thither as Dean Gate; but both the coaches were full, and we had the pleasure of seeing him back again. He will call on Daysh to-morrow to know whether the "Tamar" has sailed or not, and if she is still at the Downs he will proceed in one of the night coaches to Deal. I want to go with him, that I may explain the country to him properly between Canterbury and Rowling, but the unpleasantness of returning by myself deters me. I should like to go as far as Ospringe with him very much indeed, that I might surprise you at Godmersham.

Martha writes me word that Charles was very much admired at Kintbury, and Mrs. Lefroy never saw any one so much improved in her life, and thinks him handsomer than Henry. He appears to far more advantage here than he did at Godmersham, not surrounded by strangers and neither oppressed by a pain in his face or powder in his hair.

James christened Elizabeth Caroline on Saturday morning, and then came home. Mary, Anna, and Edward have left us of course; before the second went I took down her answer to her cousin Fanny.

Yesterday came a letter to my mother from Edward Cooper to announce, not the birth of a child, but of a living; for Mrs. Leigh has begged his acceptance of the Rectory of Hamstall-Ridware in Staffordshire, vacant by Mr. Johnson's death. We collect from his letter that he means to reside there, in which he shows his wisdom. Staffordshire is a good way off; so we shall see nothing more of them till, some fifteen years hence, the Miss Coopers are presented to us, fine, jolly, handsome, ignorant girls. The living is valued at 140*l.* a year, but perhaps it may be improvable. How will they be able to convey the furniture of the dressing-room so far in safety?

Our first cousins seem all dropping off very fast. One is incorporated into the family, another dies,

and a third goes into Staffordshire. We can learn nothing of the disposal of the other living. I have not the smallest notion of Fulwar's having it. Lord Craven has probably other connections and more intimate ones, in that line, than he now has with the Kintbury family.

Our ball on Thursday was a very poor one, only eight couple and but twenty-three people in the room; but it was not the ball's fault, for we were deprived of two or three families by the sudden illness of Mr. Wither, who was seized that morning at Winchester with a return of his former alarming complaint. An express was sent off from thence to the family; Catherine and Miss Blackford were dining with Mrs. Russell. Poor Catherine's distress must have been very great. She was prevailed on to wait till the Heathcotes could come from Wintney, and then with those two and Harris proceeded directly to Winchester. In such a disorder his danger, I suppose, must always be great; but from this attack he is now rapidly recovering, and will be well enough to return to Manydown, I fancy, in a few days.

It was a fine thing for conversation at the ball. But it deprived us not only of the Biggs, but of Mrs. Russell too, and of the Boltons and John Harwood, who were dining there likewise, and of Mr. Lane, who kept away as related to the family. Poor man! — I mean Mr. Wither — his life is so

useful, his character so respectable and worthy, that I really believe there was a good deal of sincerity in the general concern expressed on his account.

Our ball was chiefly made up of Jervoises and Terrys, the former of whom were apt to be vulgar, the latter to be noisy. I had an odd set of partners: Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Street, Colonel Jervoise, James Digweed, J. Lyford, and Mr. Briggs, a friend of the latter. I had a very pleasant evening, however, though you will probably find out that there was no particular reason for it; but I do not think it worth while to wait for enjoyment until there is some real opportunity for it. Mary behaved very well, and was not at all fidgetty. For the history of her adventures at the ball I refer you to Anna's letter.

When you come home you will have some shirts to make up for Charles. Mrs. Davies frightened him into buying a piece of Irish when we were in Basingstoke. Mr. Daysh supposes that Captain Austen's commission has reached him by this time.

Tuesday. — Your letter has pleased and amused me very much. Your essay on happy fortnights is highly ingenious, and the talobert skin made me laugh a good deal. Whenever I fall into misfortune, how many jokes it ought to furnish to my acquaintance in general, or I shall die dreadfully in their debt for entertainment.

It began to occur to me before you mentioned it

that I had been somewhat silent as to my mother's health for some time, but I thought you could have no difficulty in divining its exact state, — you, who have guessed so much stranger things. She is tolerably well, — better upon the whole than she was some weeks ago. She would tell you herself that she has a very dreadful cold in her head at present; but I have not much compassion for colds in the head without fever or sore throat.

Our own particular little brother got a place in the coach last night, and is now, I suppose, in town. I have no objection at all to your buying our gowns there, as your imagination has pictured to you exactly such a one as is necessary to make me happy. You quite abash me by your progress in notting, for I am still without silk. You must get me some in town or in Canterbury; it should be finer than yours.

I thought Edward would not approve of Charles being a crop, and rather wished you to conceal it from him at present, lest it might fall on his spirits and retard his recovery. My father furnishes him with a pig from Cheesedown; it is already killed and cut up, but it is not to weigh more than nine stone; the season is too far advanced to get him a larger one. My mother means to pay herself for the salt and the trouble of ordering it to be cured by the spareribs, the souse, and the lard. We have had one dead lamb.

I congratulate you on Mr. E. Hatton's good fortune. I suppose the marriage will now follow out of hand. Give my compliments to Miss Finch.

What time in March may we expect your return in? I begin to be very tired of answering people's questions on that subject, and independent of that, I shall be very glad to see you at home again, and then if we can get Martha and shirk . . . who will be so happy as we?

I think of going to Ibthorp in about a fortnight. My eyes are pretty well, I thank you, if you please.

Wednesday, 23d. — I wish my dear Fanny many returns of this day, and that she may on every return enjoy as much pleasure as she is now receiving from her doll's-beds.

I have just heard from Charles, who is by this time at Deal. He is to be second lieutenant, which pleases him very well. The "Endymion" is come into the Downs, which pleases him likewise. He expects to be ordered to Sheerness shortly, as the "Tamar" has never been refitted.

My father and mother made the same match for you last night, and are very much pleased with it. *He* is a beauty of my mother's.

Yours affectionately,

JANE.

Miss AUSTEN,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XIV.

13 Queen's Square, Friday (May 17).

My dearest Cassandra, — Our journey yesterday went off exceedingly well; nothing occurred to alarm or delay us. We found the roads in excellent order, had very good horses all the way, and reached Devizes with ease by four o'clock. I suppose John has told you in what manner we were divided when we left Andover, and no alteration was afterwards made. At Devizes we had comfortable rooms and a good dinner, to which we sat down about five; amongst other things we had asparagus and a lobster, which made me wish for you, and some cheesecakes, on which the children made so delightful a supper as to endear the town of Devizes to them for a long time.

Well, here we are at Bath; we got here about one o'clock, and have been arrived just long enough to go over the house, fix on our rooms, and be very well pleased with the whole of it. Poor Elizabeth has had a dismal ride of it from Devizes, for it has rained almost all the way, and our first view of Bath has been just as gloomy as it was last November twelvemonth.

I have got so many things to say, so many things equally important, that I know not on which to decide at present, and shall therefore go and eat with the children.

We stopped in Paragon as we came along, but as it was too wet and dirty for us to get out, we could only see Frank, who told us that his master was very indifferent, but had had a better night last night than usual. In Paragon we met Mrs. Foley and Mrs. Dowdeswell with her yellow shawl airing out, and at the bottom of Kingsdown Hill we met a gentleman in a buggy, who, on minute examination, turned out to be Dr. Hall — and Dr. Hall in such very deep mourning that either his mother, his wife, or himself must be dead. These are all of our acquaintance who have yet met our eyes.

I have some hopes of being plagued about my trunk; I had more a few hours ago, for it was too heavy to go by the coach which brought Thomas and Rebecca from Devizes; there was reason to suppose that it might be too heavy likewise for any other coach, and for a long time we could hear of no wagon to convey it. At last, however, we unluckily discovered that one was just on the point of setting out for this place, but at any rate the trunk cannot be here till to-morrow; so far we are safe, and who knows what may not happen to procure a further delay?

I put Mary's letter into the post-office at Andover with my own hand.

We are exceedingly pleased with the house; the rooms are quite as large as we expected. Mrs. Brom-

ley is a fat woman in mourning, and a little black kitten runs about the staircase. Elizabeth has the apartment within the drawing-room; she wanted my mother to have it, but as there was no bed in the inner one, and the stairs are so much easier of ascent, or my mother so much stronger than in Paragon as not to regard the double flight, it is settled for us to be above, where we have two very nice-sized rooms, with dirty quilts and everything comfortable. I have the outward and larger apartment, as I ought to have; which is quite as large as our bedroom at home, and my mother's is not materially less. The beds are both as large as any at Steventon, and I have a very nice chest of drawers and a closet full of shelves, — so full indeed that there is nothing else in it, and it should therefore be called a cupboard rather than a closet, I suppose.

Tell Mary that there were some carpenters at work in the inn at Devizes this morning, but as I could not be sure of their being Mrs. W. Fowle's relations, I did not make myself known to them.

I hope it will be a tolerable afternoon. When first we came, all the umbrellas were up, but now the pavements are getting very white again.

My mother does not seem at all the worse for her journey, nor are any of us, I hope, though Edward seemed rather fagged last night, and

not very brisk this morning; but I trust the bustle of sending for tea, coffee, and sugar, etc., and going out to taste a cheese himself, will do him good.

There was a very long list of arrivals here in the newspaper yesterday, so that we need not immediately dread absolute solitude; and there is a public breakfast in Sydney Gardens every morning, so that we shall not be wholly starved.

Elizabeth has just had a very good account of the three little boys. I hope you are very busy and very comfortable. I find no difficulty in closing my eyes. I like our situation very much; it is far more cheerful than Paragon, and the prospect from the drawing-room window, at which I now write, is rather picturesque, as it commands a prospective view of the left side of Brock Street, broken by three Lombardy poplars in the garden of the last house in Queen's Parade.

I am rather impatient to know the fate of my best gown, but I suppose it will be some days before Frances can get through the trunk. In the mean time I am, with many thanks for your trouble in making it, as well as marking my silk stockings,

Yours very affectionately,

JANE.

A great deal of love from everybody.

Miss AUSTEN, Steventon, Overton, Hants.

XV.

13 Queen Square, Sunday (June 2).

My dear Cassandra, — I am obliged to you for two letters, one from yourself and the other from Mary, for of the latter I knew nothing till on the receipt of yours yesterday, when the pigeon-basket was examined, and I received my due. As I have written to her since the time which ought to have brought me hers, I suppose she will consider herself, as I choose to consider her, still in my debt.

I will lay out all the little judgment I have in endeavoring to get such stockings for Anna as she will approve; but I do not know that I shall execute Martha's commission at all, for I am not fond of ordering shoes; and, at any rate, they shall all have flat heels.

What must I tell you of Edward? Truth or falsehood? I will try the former, and you may choose for yourself another time. He was better yesterday than he had been for two or three days before, — about as well as while he was at Steventon. He drinks at the Hetling Pump, is to bathe to-morrow, and try electricity on Tuesday. He proposed the latter himself to Dr. Fellowes, who made no objection to it, but I fancy we are all unanimous in expecting no advantage from it. At

present I have no great notion of our staying here beyond the month.

I heard from Charles last week; they were to sail on Wednesday.

My mother seems remarkably well. My uncle overwalked himself at first, and can now only travel in a chair, but is otherwise very well.

My cloak is come home. I like it very much, and can now exclaim with delight, like J. Bond at hay-harvest, "This is what I have been looking for these three years." I saw some gauzes in a shop in Bath Street yesterday at only 4*d.* a yard, but they were not so good or so pretty as mine. Flowers are very much worn, and fruit is still more the thing. Elizabeth has a bunch of strawberries, and I have seen grapes, cherries, plums, and apricots. There are likewise almonds and raisins, French plums, and tamarinds at the grocers', but I have never seen any of them in hats. A plum or greengage would cost three shillings; cherries and grapes about five, I believe, but this is at some of the dearest shops. My aunt has told me of a very cheap one, near Walcot Church, to which I shall go in quest of something for you. I have never seen an old woman at the pump-room.

Elizabeth has given me a hat, and it is not only a pretty hat, but a pretty style of hat too. It is something like Eliza's, only, instead of being all

straw, half of it is narrow purple ribbon. I flatter myself, however, that you can understand very little of it from this description. Heaven forbid that I should ever offer such encouragement to explanations as to give a clear one on any occasion myself! But I must write no more of this. . . .

I spent Friday evening with the Mapletons, and was obliged to submit to being pleased in spite of my inclination. We took a very charming walk from six to eight up Beacon Hill, and across some fields, to the village of Charlecombe, which is sweetly situated in a little green valley, as a village with such a name ought to be. Marianne is sensible and intelligent; and even Jane, considering how fair she is, is not unpleasant. We had a Miss North and a Mr. Gould of our party; the latter walked home with me after tea. He is a very young man, just entered Oxford, wears spectacles, and has heard that "Evelina" was written by Dr. Johnson.

I am afraid I cannot undertake to carry Martha's shoes home, for, though we had plenty of room in our trunks when we came, we shall have many more things to take back, and I must allow besides for my packing.

There is to be a grand gala on Tuesday evening in Sydney Gardens, a concert, with illuminations and fireworks. To the latter Elizabeth and I look forward with pleasure, and even the concert

will have more than its usual charm for me, as the gardens are large enough for me to get pretty well beyond the reach of its sound. In the morning Lady Willoughby is to present the colors to some corps, or Yeomanry, or other, in the Crescent, and that such festivities may have a proper commencement, we think of going to . . .

I am quite pleased with Martha and Mrs. Lefroy for wanting the pattern of our caps, but I am not so well pleased with your giving it to them. Some wish, some prevailing wish, is necessary to the animation of everybody's mind, and in gratifying this you leave them to form some other which will not probably be half so innocent. I shall not forget to write to Frank. Duty and love, etc.

Yours affectionately, JANE.

My uncle is quite surprised at my hearing from you so often; but as long as we can keep the frequency of our correspondence from Martha's uncle, we will not fear our own.

Miss AUSTEN, Steventon.

XVI.

13 QUEEN SQUARE, Tuesday (June 11).

MY DEAR CASSANDRA, — Your letter yesterday made me very happy. I am heartily glad that you have escaped any share in the impurities of

Deane, and not sorry, as it turns out, that our stay here has been lengthened. I feel tolerably secure of our getting away next week, though it is certainly possible that we may remain till Thursday the 27th. I wonder what we shall do with all our intended visits this summer! I should like to make a compromise with Adlestrop, Harden, and Bookham, that Martha's spending the summer at Steventon should be considered as our respective visits to them all.

Edward has been pretty well for this last week, and as the waters have never disagreed with him in any respect, we are inclined to hope that he will derive advantage from them in the end. Everybody encourages us in this expectation, for they all say that the effect of the waters cannot be negative, and many are the instances in which their benefit is felt afterwards more than on the spot. He is more comfortable here than I thought he would be, and so is Elizabeth, though they will both, I believe, be very glad to get away — the latter especially, which one can't wonder at somehow. So much for Mrs. Piozzi. I had some thoughts of writing the whole of my letter in her style, but I believe I shall not.

Though you have given me unlimited powers concerning your sprig, I cannot determine what to do about it, and shall therefore in this and in every other future letter continue to ask your further

directions. We have been to the cheap shop, and very cheap we found it, but there are only flowers made there, no fruit; and as I could get four or five very pretty sprigs of the former for the same money which would procure only one Orleans plum — in short, could get more for three or four shillings than I could have means of bringing home — I cannot decide on the fruit till I hear from you again. Besides, I cannot help thinking that it is more natural to have flowers grow out of the head than fruit. What do you think on that subject?

I would not let Martha read "First Impressions"[1] again upon any account, and am very glad that I did not leave it in your power. She is very cunning, but I saw through her design; she means to publish it from memory, and one more perusal must enable her to do it. As for "Fitzalbini," when I get home she shall have it, as soon as ever she will own that Mr. Elliott is handsomer than Mr. Lance, that fair men are preferable to black; for I mean to take every opportunity of rooting out her prejudices.

Benjamin Portal is here. How charming that is! I do not exactly know why, but the phrase followed so naturally that I could not help putting it down. My mother saw him the other day, but without making herself known to him.

[1] The title first chosen for "Pride and Prejudice."

I am very glad you liked my lace, and so are you, and so is Martha, and we are all glad together. I have got your cloak home, which is quite delightful, — as delightful at least as half the circumstances which are called so.

I do not know what is the matter with me today, but I cannot write quietly; I am always wandering away into some exclamation or other. Fortunately I have nothing very particular to say.

We walked to Weston one evening last week, and liked it very much. Liked what very much? Weston? No, walking to Weston. I have not expressed myself properly, but I hope you will understand me.

We have not been to any public place lately, nor performed anything out of the common daily routine of No. 13 Queen Square, Bath. But today we were to have dashed away at a very extraordinary rate, by dining out, had it not so happened that we did not go.

Edward renewed his acquaintance lately with Mr. Evelyn, who lives in the Queen's Parade, and was invited to a family dinner, which I believe at first Elizabeth was rather sorry at his accepting; but yesterday Mrs. Evelyn called on us, and her manners were so pleasing that we liked the idea of going very much. The Biggs would call her a nice woman. But Mr. Evelyn, who was indis-

posed yesterday, is worse to-day, and we are put off.

It is rather impertinent to suggest any household care to a housekeeper, but I just venture to say that the coffee-mill will be wanted every day while Edward is at Steventon, as he always drinks coffee for breakfast.

Fanny desires her love to you, her love to grandpapa, her love to Anna, and her love to Hannah; the latter is particularly to be remembered. Edward desires his love to you, to grandpapa, to Anna, to little Edward, to Aunt James and Uncle James, and he hopes all your turkeys and ducks and chicken and guinea fowls are very well; and he wishes you very much to send him a printed letter, and so does Fanny — and they both rather think they shall answer it. . . .

Dr. Gardiner was married yesterday to Mrs. Percy and her three daughters.

Now I will give you the history of Mary's veil, in the purchase of which I have so considerably involved you that it is my duty to economize for you in the flowers. I had no difficulty in getting a muslin veil for half a guinea, and not much more in discovering afterwards that the muslin was thick, dirty, and ragged, and therefore would by no means do for a united gift. I changed it consequently as soon as I could, and, considering what a state my imprudence had reduced me to,

I thought myself lucky in getting a black lace one for sixteen shillings. I hope the half of that sum will not greatly exceed what you had intended to offer upon the altar of sister-in-law affection.

Yours affectionately, JANE.

They do not seem to trouble you much from Manydown. I have long wanted to quarrel with them, and I believe I shall take this opportunity. There is no denying that they are very capricious — for they like to enjoy their elder sister's company when they can.

Miss AUSTEN, Steventon, Overton, Hants.

XVII.

STEVENTON, Thursday (November 20, 1800).

MY DEAR CASSANDRA, — Your letter took me quite by surprise this morning; you are very welcome, however, and I am very much obliged to you. I believe I drank too much wine last night at Hurstbourne; I know not how else to account for the shaking of my hand to-day. You will kindly make allowance therefore for any indistinctness of writing, by attributing it to this venial error.

Naughty Charles did not come on Tuesday, but good Charles came yesterday morning. About two o'clock he walked in on a Gosport hack. His

feeling equal to such a fatigue is a good sign, and his feeling no fatigue in it a still better. He walked down to Deane to dinner; he danced the whole evening, and to-day is no more tired than a gentleman ought to be.

Your desiring to hear from me on Sunday will, perhaps, bring you a more particular account of the ball than you may care for, because one is prone to think much more of such things the morning after they happen, than when time has entirely driven them out of one's recollection.

It was a pleasant evening; Charles found it remarkably so, but I cannot tell why, unless the absence of Miss Terry, towards whom his conscience reproaches him with being now perfectly indifferent, was a relief to him. There were only twelve dances, of which I danced nine, and was merely prevented from dancing the rest by the want of a partner. We began at ten, supped at one, and were at Deane before five. There were but fifty people in the room; very few families indeed from our side of the county, and not many more from the other. My partners were the two St. Johns, Hooper, Holder, and a very prodigious Mr. Mathew, with whom I called the last, and whom I liked the best of my little stock.

There were very few beauties, and such as there were were not very handsome. Miss Iremonger did not look well, and Mrs. Blount was the only

one much admired. She appeared exactly as she did in September, with the same broad face, diamond bandeau, white shoes, pink husband, and fat neck. The two Miss Coxes were there; I traced in one the remains of the vulgar, broad-featured girl who danced at Enham eight years ago; the other is refined into a nice, composed-looking girl, like Catherine Bigg. I looked at Sir Thomas Champneys, and thought of poor Rosalie; I looked at his daughter, and thought her a queer animal with a white neck. Mrs. Warren I was constrained to think a very fine young woman, which I much regret. She danced away with great activity. Her husband is ugly enough, uglier even than his cousin John; but he does not look so *very* old. The Miss Maitlands are both prettyish, very like Anne, with brown skins, large dark eyes, and a good deal of nose. The General has got the gout, and Mrs. Maitland the jaundice. Miss Debary, Susan, and Sally, all in black, but without any statues, made their appearance, and I was as civil to them as circumstances would allow me. . . .

Mary said that I looked very well last night. I wore my aunt's gown and handkerchief, and my hair was at least tidy, which was all my ambition. I will now have done with the ball, and I will moreover go and dress for dinner. . . .

Farewell; Charles sends you his best love, and Edward his worst. If you think the distinction

improper, you may take the worst yourself. He will write to you when he gets back to his ship, and in the mean time desires that you will consider me as

Your affectionate sister, J. A.

Friday. — I have determined to go on Thursday, but of course not before the post comes in. Charles is in very good looks indeed. I had the comfort of finding out the other evening who all the fat girls with long noses were that disturbed me at the First H. ball. They all proved to be Miss Atkinsons of En— [*illegible*].

I rejoice to say that we have just had another letter from our dear Frank. It is to you, very short, written from Larnica in Cyprus, and so lately as October 2. He came from Alexandria, and was to return there in three or four days, knew nothing of his promotion, and does not write above twenty lines, from a doubt of the letter's ever reaching you, and an idea of all letters being opened at Vienna. He wrote a few days before to you from Alexandria by the "Mercury," sent with despatches to Lord Keith. Another letter must be owing to us besides this, one if not two; because none of these are to me. Henry comes to-morrow, for one night only.

My mother has heard from Mrs. E. Leigh. Lady Saye and Seale and her daughter are going to remove to Bath. Mrs. Estwick is married again to

a Mr. Sloane, a young man under age, without the knowledge of either family. He bears a good character, however.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XVIII.

Steventon, Saturday (January 3, 1801).

My dear Cassandra, — As you have by this time received my last letter, it is fit that I should begin another; and I begin with the hope, which is at present uppermost in my mind, that you often wore a white gown in the morning at the time of all the gay parties being with you.

Our visit at Ash Park, last Wednesday, went off in a *come-cá* way. We met Mr. Lefroy and Tom Chute, played at cards, and came home again. James and Mary dined here on the following day, and at night Henry set off in the mail for London. He was as agreeable as ever during his visit, and has not lost anything in Miss Lloyd's estimation.

Yesterday we were quite alone — only our four selves; but to-day the scene is agreeably varied by Mary's driving Martha to Basingstoke, and Martha's afterwards dining at Deane.

My mother looks forward with as much certainty as you can do to our keeping two maids; my father is the only one not in the secret. We

plan having a steady cook and a young giddy housemaid, with a sedate, middle-aged man, who is to undertake the double office of husband to the former and sweetheart to the latter. No children of course to be allowed on either side.

You feel more for John Bond than John Bond deserves. I am sorry to lower his character, but he is not ashamed to own himself that he has no doubt at all of getting a good place, and that he had even an offer many years ago from a Farmer Paine of taking him into his service whenever he might quit my father's.

There are three parts of Bath which we have thought of as likely to have houses in them, — Westgate Buildings, Charles Street, and some of the short streets leading from Laura Place or Pulteney Street.

Westgate Buildings, though quite in the lower part of the town, are not badly situated themselves. The street is broad, and has rather a good appearance. Charles Street, however, I think is preferable. The buildings are new, and its nearness to Kingsmead Fields would be a pleasant circumstance. Perhaps you may remember, or perhaps you may forget, that Charles Street leads from the Queen Square Chapel to the two Green Park Streets.

The houses in the streets near Laura Place I should expect to be above our price. Gay Street

would be too high, except only the lower house on the left-hand side as you ascend. Towards that my mother has no disinclination; it used to be lower rented than any other house in the row, from some inferiority in the apartments. But above all others her wishes are at present fixed on the corner house in Chapel Row, which opens into Prince's Street. Her knowledge of it, however, is confined only to the outside, and therefore she is equally uncertain of its being really desirable as of its being to be had. In the mean time she assures you that she will do everything in her power to avoid Trim Street, although you have not expressed the fearful presentiment of it which was rather expected.

We know that Mrs. Perrot will want to get us into Oxford Buildings, but we all unite in particular dislike of that part of the town, and therefore hope to escape. Upon all these different situations you and Edward may confer together, and your opinion of each will be expected with eagerness.

As to our pictures, the battle-piece, Mr. Nibbs, Sir William East, and all the old heterogeneous, miscellany, manuscript, Scriptural pieces dispersed over the house, are to be given to James. Your own drawings will not cease to be your own, and the two paintings on tin will be at your disposal. My mother says that the French agricultural prints

in the best bedroom were given by Edward to his two sisters. Do you or he know anything about it?

She has written to my aunt, and we are all impatient for the answer. I do not know how to give up the idea of our both going to Paragon in May. Your going I consider as indispensably necessary, and I shall not like being left behind; there is no place here or hereabouts that I shall want to be staying at, and though, to be sure, the keep of two will be more than of one, I will endeavor to make the difference less by disordering my stomach with Bath buns; and as to the trouble of accommodating us, whether there are one or two, it is much the same.

According to the first plan, my mother and our two selves are to travel down together, and my father follow us afterwards in about a fortnight or three weeks. We have promised to spend a couple of days at Ibthorp in our way. We must all meet at Bath, you know, before we set out for the sea, and, everything considered, I think the first plan as good as any.

My father and mother, wisely aware of the difficulty of finding in all Bath such a bed as their own, have resolved on taking it with them; all the beds, indeed, that we shall want are to be removed, — namely, besides theirs, our own two, the best for a spare one, and two for servants; and these

necessary articles will probably be the only material ones that it would answer to send down. I do not think it will be worth while to remove any of our chests of drawers; we shall be able to get some of a much more commodious sort, made of deal, and painted to look very neat; and I flatter myself that for little comforts of all kinds our apartment will be one of the most complete things of the sort all over Bath, Bristol included.

We have thought at times of removing the sideboard, or a Pembroke table, or some other piece of furniture, but, upon the whole, it has ended in thinking that the trouble and risk of the removal would be more than the advantage of having them at a place where everything may be purchased. Pray send your opinion.

Martha has as good as promised to come to us again in March. Her spirits are better than they were. . . .

My mother bargains for having no trouble at all in furnishing our house in Bath, and I have engaged for your willingly undertaking to do it all. I get more and more reconciled to the idea of our removal. We have lived long enough in this neighborhood: the Basingstoke balls are certainly on the decline, there is something interesting in the bustle of going away, and the prospect of spending future summers by the sea or in Wales is very delightful. For a time we shall now pos-

sess many of the advantages which I have often thought of with envy in the wives of sailors or soldiers. It must not be generally known, however, that I am not sacrificing a great deal in quitting the country, or I can expect to inspire no tenderness, no interest, in those we leave behind. . . .

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XIX.

Steventon, Thursday (January 8).

My dear Cassandra, — The "perhaps" which concluded my last letter being only a "perhaps," will not occasion your being overpowered with surprise, I dare say, if you should receive this before Tuesday, which, unless circumstances are very perverse, will be the case. I received yours with much general philanthropy, and still more peculiar good-will, two days ago; and I suppose I need not tell you that it was very long, being written on a foolscap sheet, and very entertaining, being written by you.

Mr. Payne has been dead long enough for Henry to be out of mourning for him before his last visit, though we knew nothing of it till about that time. Why he died, or of what complaint, or to what noblemen he bequeathed his four daughters in marriage, we have not heard.

I am glad that the Wildmans are going to give

a ball, and hope you will not fail to benefit both yourself and me by laying out a few kisses in the purchase of a frank. I believe you are right in proposing to delay the cambric muslin, and I submit with a kind of voluntary reluctance.

Mr. Peter Debary has declined Deane curacy; he wishes to be settled near London. A foolish reason! as if Deane were not near London in comparison of Exeter or York. Take the whole world through, and he will find many more places at a greater distance from London than Deane than he will at a less. What does he think of Glencoe or Lake Katherine?

I feel rather indignant that any possible objection should be raised against so valuable a piece of preferment, so delightful a situation! — that Deane should not be universally allowed to be as near the metropolis as any other country villages. As this is the case, however, as Mr. Peter Debary has shown himself a Peter in the blackest sense of the word, we are obliged to look elsewhere for an heir; and my father has thought it a necessary compliment to James Digweed to offer the curacy to him, though without considering it as either a desirable or an eligible situation for him. Unless he is in love with Miss Lyford, I think he had better not be settled exactly in this neighborhood; and unless he is very much in love with her indeed, he is not likely to think a salary of 50*l.* equal in value or efficiency to one of 75*l.*

Were you indeed to be considered as one of the fixtures of the house! — but you were never actually erected in it either by Mr. Egerton Brydges or Mrs. Lloyd. . . .

You are very kind in planning presents for me to make, and my mother has shown me exactly the same attention; but as I do not choose to have generosity dictated to me, I shall not resolve on giving my cabinet to Anna till the first thought of it has been my own.

Sidmouth is now talked of as our summer abode. Get all the information, therefore, about it that you can from Mrs. C. Cage.

My father's old ministers are already deserting him to pay their court to his son. The brown mare, which, as well as the black, was to devolve on James at our removal, has not had patience to wait for that, and has settled herself even now at Deane. The death of Hugh Capet, which, like that of Mr. Skipsey, though undesired, was not wholly unexpected, being purposely effected, has made the immediate possession of the mare very convenient, and everything else I suppose will be seized by degrees in the same manner. Martha and I work at the books every day.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XX.

Steventon, Wednesday (January 14).

Poor Miss Austen! It appears to me that I have rather oppressed you of late by the frequency of my letters. You had hoped not to hear from me again before Tuesday, but Sunday showed you with what a merciless sister you had to deal. I cannot recall the past, but you shall not hear from me quite so often in future.

Your letter to Mary was duly received before she left Deane with Martha yesterday morning, and it gives us great pleasure to know that the Chilham ball was so agreeable, and that you danced four dances with Mr. Kemble. Desirable, however, as the latter circumstance was, I cannot help wondering at its taking place. Why did you dance four dances with so stupid a man? Why not rather dance two of them with some elegant brother officer who was struck with your appearance as soon as you entered the room?

Martha left you her best love. She will write to you herself in a short time; but trusting to my memory rather than her own, she has nevertheless desired me to ask you to purchase for her two bottles of Steele's lavender water when you are in town, provided you should go to the shop on your own account, otherwise you may be sure that she would not have you recollect the request.

James dined with us yesterday, wrote to Edward in the evening, filled three sides of paper, every line inclining too much towards the northeast, and the very first line of all scratched out, and this morning he joins his lady in the fields of Elysium and Ibthorp.

Last Friday was a very busy day with us. We were visited by Miss Lyford and Mr. Bayle. The latter began his operations in the house, but had only time to finish the four sitting-rooms; the rest is deferred till the spring is more advanced and the days longer. He took his paper of appraisement away with him, and therefore we only know the estimate he has made of one or two articles of furniture which my father particularly inquired into. I understand, however, that he was of opinion that the whole would amount to more than two hundred pounds, and it is not imagined that this will comprehend the brewhouse and many other, etc., etc.

Miss Lyford was very pleasant, and gave my mother such an account of the houses in Westgate Buildings, where Mrs. Lyford lodged four years ago, as made her think of a situation there with great pleasure, but your opposition will be without difficulty decisive, and my father, in particular, who was very well inclined towards the Row before, has now ceased to think of it entirely. At present the environs of Laura Place seem to be

his choice. His views on the subject are much advanced since I came home; he grows quite ambitious, and actually requires now a comfortable and a creditable-looking house.

On Saturday Miss Lyford went to her long home, — that is to say, it was a long way off, — and soon afterwards a party of fine ladies issuing from a well-known commodious green vehicle, their heads full of Bantam cocks and Galinies, entered the house, — Mrs. Heathcote, Mrs. Harwood, Mrs. James Austen, Miss Bigg, Miss Jane Blachford.

Hardly a day passes in which we do not have some visitor or other: yesterday came Mrs. Bramstone, who is very sorry that she is to lose us, and afterwards Mr. Holder, who was shut up for an hour with my father and James in a most awful manner. John Bond *est à lui*. . . .

XXI.

Steventon, Wednesday (January 21).

Expect a most agreeable letter, for not being overburdened with subject (having nothing at all to say), I shall have no check to my genius from beginning to end.

Well, and so Frank's letter has made you very happy, but you are afraid he would not have patience to stay for the "Haarlem," which you wish him to have done as being safer than the

merchantman. Poor fellow! to wait from the middle of November to the end of December, and perhaps even longer, it must be sad work; especially in a place where the ink is so abominably pale. What a surprise to him it must have been on October 20, to be visited, collared, and thrust out of the "Petterel" by Captain Inglis. He kindly passes over the poignancy of his feelings in quitting his ship, his officers, and his men.

What a pity it is that he should not be in England at the time of this promotion, because he certainly would have had an appointment, so everybody says, and therefore it must be right for me to say it too. Had he been really here, the certainty of the appointment, I dare say, would not have been half so great, but as it could not be brought to the proof, his absence will be always a lucky source of regret.

Eliza talks of having read in a newspaper that all the first lieutenants of the frigates whose captains were to be sent into line-of-battle ships were to be promoted to the rank of commanders. If it be true, Mr. Valentine may afford himself a fine Valentine's knot, and Charles may perhaps become first of the "Endymion," though I suppose Captain Durham is too likely to bring a villain with him under that denomination. . . .

The neighborhood have quite recovered the death of Mrs. Rider, — so much so, that I think they are

rather rejoiced at it now; her things were so very dear! and Mrs. Rogers is to be all that is desirable. Not even death itself can fix the friendship of the world. . . .

The Wylmots being robbed must be an amusing thing to their acquaintance, and I hope it is as much their pleasure as it seems their avocation to be subjects of general entertainment.

I have a great mind not to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, which I have just had the pleasure of reading, because I am so ashamed to compare the sprawling lines of this with it. But if I say all that I have to say, I hope I have no reason to hang myself. . . .

Why did not J. D. make his proposals to you? I suppose he went to see the cathedral, that he might know how he should like to be married in it. . . .

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXII.

Southampton, Wednesday (January 7, 1807).

My dear Cassandra, — You were mistaken in supposing I should expect your letter on Sunday; I had no idea of hearing from you before Tuesday, and my pleasure yesterday was therefore unhurt by any previous disappointment. I thank

you for writing so much; you must really have sent me the value of two letters in one. We are extremely glad to hear that Elizabeth is so much better, and hope you will be sensible of still further amendment in her when you return from Canterbury.

Of your visit there I must now speak "incessantly;" it surprises, but pleases me more, and I consider it as a very just and honorable distinction of you, and not less to the credit of Mrs. Knight. I have no doubt of your spending your time with her most pleasantly in quiet and rational conversation, and am so far from thinking her expectations of you will be deceived, that my only fear is of your being so agreeable, so much to her taste, as to make her wish to keep you with her forever. If that should be the case, we must remove to Canterbury, which I should not like so well as Southampton.

When you receive this, our guests will be all gone or going; and I shall be left to the comfortable disposal of my time, to ease of mind from the torments of rice puddings and apple dumplings, and probably to regret that I did not take more pains to please them all.

Mrs. J. Austen has asked me to return with her to Steventon; I need not give my answer; and she has invited my mother to spend there the time of Mrs. F. A.'s confinement, which she seems half inclined to do.

A few days ago I had a letter from Miss Irvine, and as I was in her debt, you will guess it to be a remonstrance, not a very severe one, however; the first page is in her usual retrospective, jealous, inconsistent style, but the remainder is chatty and harmless. She supposes my silence may have proceeded from resentment of her not having written to inquire particularly after my hooping-cough, etc. She is a funny one.

I have answered her letter, and have endeavored to give something like the truth with as little incivility as I could, by placing my silence to the want of subject in the very quiet way in which we live. Phebe has repented, and stays. I have also written to Charles, and I answered Miss Buller's letter by return of post, as I intended to tell you in my last.

Two or three things I recollected when it was too late, that I might have told you; one is that the Welbys have lost their eldest son by a putrid fever at Eton, and another that Tom Chute is going to settle in Norfolk.

You have scarcely ever mentioned Lizzy since your being at Godmersham. I hope it is not because she is altered for the worse.

I cannot yet satisfy Fanny as to Mrs. Foote's baby's name, and I must not encourage her to expect a good one, as Captain Foote is a professed adversary to all but the plainest; he likes only

Mary, Elizabeth, Anne, etc. Our best chance is of "Caroline," which in compliment to a sister seems the only exception.

He dined with us on Friday, and I fear will not soon venture again, for the strength of our dinner was a boiled leg of mutton, underdone even for James; and Captain Foote has a particular dislike to underdone mutton; but he was so good-humored and pleasant that I did not much mind his being starved. He gives us all the most cordial invitation to his house in the country, saying just what the Williams ought to say to make us welcome. Of them we have seen nothing since you left us, and we hear that they are just gone to Bath again, to be out of the way of further alterations at Brooklands.

Mrs. F. A. has had a very agreeable letter from Mrs. Dickson, who was delighted with the purse, and desires her not to provide herself with a christening dress, which is exactly what her young correspondent wanted; and she means to defer making any of the caps as long as she can, in hope of having Mrs. D.'s present in time to be serviceable as a pattern. She desires me to tell you that the gowns were cut out before your letter arrived, but that they are long enough for Caroline. The *Beds*, as I believe they are called, have fallen to Frank's share to continue, and of course are cut out to admiration.

"Alphonsine" did not do. We were disgusted in twenty pages, as, independent of a bad translation, it has indelicacies which disgrace a pen hitherto so pure; and we changed it for the "Female Quixote," which now makes our evening amusement; to me a very high one, as I find the work quite equal to what I remembered it. Mrs. F. A., to whom it is new, enjoys it as one could wish; the other Mary, I believe, has little pleasure from that or any other book.

My mother does not seem at all more disappointed than ourselves at the termination of the family treaty; she thinks less of that just now than of the comfortable state of her own finances, which she finds on closing her year's accounts beyond her expectation, as she begins the new year with a balance of 30*l.* in her favor; and when she has written her answer to my aunt, which you know always hangs a little upon her mind, she will be above the world entirely. You will have a great deal of unreserved discourse with Mrs. K., I dare say, upon this subject, as well as upon many other of our family matters. Abuse everybody but me.

Thursday. — We expected James yesterday, but he did not come; if he comes at all now, his visit will be a very short one, as he must return to-morrow, that Ajax and the chair may be sent to Winchester on Saturday. Caroline's new pelisse

depended upon her mother's being able or not to come so far in the chair; how the guinea that will be saved by the same means of return is to be spent I know not. Mrs. J. A. does not talk much of poverty now, though she has no hope of my brother's being able to buy another horse next summer.

Their scheme against Warwickshire continues, but I doubt the family's being at Stoneleigh so early as James says he must go, which is May.

My mother is afraid I have not been explicit enough on the subject of her wealth; she began 1806 with 68*l.* she begins 1807 with 99*l.*, and this after 32*l.* purchase of stock. Frank too has been settling his accounts and making calculations, and each party feels quite equal to our present expenses; but much increase of house-rent would not do for either. Frank limits himself, I believe, to four hundred a year.

You will be surprised to hear that Jenny is not yet come back; we have heard nothing of her since her reaching Itchingswell, and can only suppose that she must be detained by illness in somebody or other, and that she has been each day expecting to be able to come on the morrow. I am glad I did not know beforehand that she was to be absent during the whole or almost the whole of our friends being with us, for though the inconvenience has not been nothing, I should have feared

still more. Our dinners have certainly suffered not a little by having only Molly's head and Molly's hands to conduct them; she fries better than she did, but not like Jenny.

We did *not* take our walk on Friday, it was too dirty, nor have we yet done it; we may perhaps do something like it to-day, as after seeing Frank skate, which he hopes to do in the meadows by the beech, we are to treat ourselves with a passage over the ferry. It is one of the pleasantest frosts I ever knew, so very quiet. I hope it will last some time longer for Frank's sake, who is quite anxious to get some skating; he tried yesterday, but it would not do.

Our acquaintance increase too fast. He was recognized lately by Admiral Bertie, and a few days since arrived the Admiral and his daughter Catherine to wait upon us. There was nothing to like or dislike in either. To the Berties are to be added the Lances, with whose cards we have been endowed, and whose visit Frank and I returned yesterday. They live about a mile and three-quarters from S. to the right of the new road to Portsmouth, and I believe their house is one of those which are to be seen almost anywhere among the woods on the other side of the Itchen. It is a handsome building, stands high, and in a very beautiful situation.

We found only Mrs. Lance at home, and whether

she boasts any offspring besides a grand pianoforte did not appear. She was civil and chatty enough, and offered to introduce us to some acquaintance in Southampton, which we gratefully declined.

I suppose they must be acting by the orders of Mr. Lance of Netherton in this civility, as there seems no other reason for their coming near us. They will not come often, I dare say. They live in a handsome style and are rich, and she seemed to like to be rich, and we gave her to understand that we were far from being so; she will soon feel therefore that we are not worth her acquaintance.

You must have heard from Martha by this time. We have had no accounts of Kintbury since her letter to me.

Mrs. F. A. has had one fainting fit lately; it came on as usual after eating a hearty dinner, but did not last long.

I can recollect nothing more to say. When my letter is gone, I suppose I shall.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

I have just asked Caroline if I should send her love to her godmamma, to which she answered "Yes."

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXIII.

Southampton, February 8.

. . . Our garden is putting in order by a man who bears a remarkably good character, has a very fine complexion, and asks something less than the first. The shrubs which border the gravel walk, he says, are only sweetbrier and roses, and the latter of an indifferent sort; we mean to get a few of a better kind, therefore, and at my own particular desire he procures us some syringas. I could not do without a syringa, for the sake of Cowper's line. We talk also of a laburnum. The border under the terrace wall is clearing away to receive currants and gooseberry bushes, and a spot is found very proper for raspberries.

The alterations and improvements within doors, too, advance very properly, and the offices will be made very convenient indeed. Our dressing-table is constructing on the spot, out of a large kitchen table belonging to the house, for doing which we have the permission of Mr. Husket, Lord Lansdown's painter, — domestic painter, I should call him, for he lives in the castle. Domestic chaplains have given way to this more necessary office, and I suppose whenever the walls want no touching up he is employed about my lady's face.

The morning was so wet that I was afraid we

should not be able to see our little visitor; but Frank, who alone could go to church, called for her after service, and she is now talking away at my side and examining the treasures of my writing-desk drawers, — very happy, I believe. Not at all shy, of course. Her name is Catherine, and her sister's Caroline. She is something like her brother, and as short for her age, but not so well-looking.

What is become of all the shyness in the world? Moral as well as natural diseases disappear in the progress of time, and new ones take their place. Shyness and the sweating sickness have given way to confidence and paralytic complaints. . . .

Evening. — Our little visitor has just left us, and left us highly pleased with her; she is a nice, natural, open-hearted, affectionate girl, with all the ready civility which one sees in the best children in the present day; so unlike anything that I was myself at her age, that I am often all astonishment and shame. Half her time was spent at spillikins, which I consider as a very valuable part of our household furniture, and as not the least important benefaction from the family of Knight to that of Austen.

But I must tell you a story. Mary has for some time had notice from Mrs. Dickson of the intended arrival of a certain Miss Fowler in this place. Miss F. is an intimate friend of Mrs. D., and a good deal known as such to Mary. On Thursday

last she called here while we were out. Mary found, on our return, her card with only her name on it, and she had left word that she would call again. The particularity of this made us talk, and, among other conjectures, Frank said in joke, "I dare say she is staying with the Pearsons." The connection of the names struck Mary, and she immediately recollected Miss Fowler's having been very intimate with persons so called, and, upon putting everything together, we have scarcely a doubt of her being actually staying with the only family in the place whom we cannot visit.

What a *contretemps!* in the language of France. What an unluckiness ! in that of Madame Duval. The black gentleman has certainly employed one of his menial imps to bring about this complete, though trifling mischief. Miss F. has never called again, but we are in daily expectation of it. Miss P. has, of course, given her a proper understanding of the business. It is evident that Miss F. did not expect or wish to have the visit returned, and Frank is quite as much on his guard for his wife as we could desire for her sake or our own.

We shall rejoice in being so near Winchester when Edward belongs to it, and can never have our spare bed filled more to our satisfaction than by him. Does he leave Eltham at Easter?

We are reading "Clarentine," and are surprised

to find how foolish it is. I remember liking it much less on a second reading than at the first, and it does not bear a third at all. It is full of unnatural conduct and forced difficulties, without striking merit of any kind.

Miss Harrison is going into Devonshire, to attend Mrs. Dusantoy, as usual. Miss J. is married to young Mr. G., and is to be very unhappy. He swears, drinks, is cross, jealous, selfish, and brutal. The match makes her family miserable, and has occasioned his being disinherited.

The Browns are added to our list of acquaintance. He commands the Sea Fencibles here, under Sir Thomas, and was introduced at his own desire by the latter when we saw him last week. As yet the gentlemen only have visited, as Mrs. B. is ill; but she is a nice-looking woman, and wears one of the prettiest straw bonnets in the place.

Monday. — The garret beds are made, and ours will be finished to-day. I had hoped it would be finished on Saturday, but neither Mrs. Hall nor Jenny was able to give help enough for that, and I have as yet done very little, and Mary nothing at all. This week we shall do more, and I should like to have all the five beds completed by the end of it. There will then be the window-curtains, sofa-cover, and a carpet to be altered.

I should not be surprised if we were to be visited by James again this week; he gave us reason

to expect him soon, and if they go to Eversley he cannot come next week.

There, I flatter myself I have constructed you a smartish letter, considering my want of materials; but, like my dear Dr. Johnson, I believe I have dealt more in notions than facts.

I hope your cough is gone, and that you are otherwise well, and remain, with love,

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXIV.

Godmersham, Wednesday (June 15, 1808).

My dear Cassandra, — Where shall I begin? Which of all my important nothings shall I tell you first? At half after seven yesterday morning Henry saw us into our own carriage, and we drove away from the Bath Hotel; which, by the by, had been found most uncomfortable quarters, — very dirty, very noisy, and very ill-provided. James began his journey by the coach at five. Our first eight miles were hot; Deptford Hill brought to my mind our hot journey into Kent fourteen years ago; but after Blackheath we suffered nothing, and as the day advanced it grew quite cool. At Dartford, which we reached within the two hours and three-quarters, we went to the Bull, the same

inn at which we breakfasted in that said journey, and on the present occasion had about the same bad butter.

At half-past ten we were again off, and, travelling on without any adventure reached Sittingbourne by three. Daniel was watching for us at the door of the George, and I was acknowledged very kindly by Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, to the latter of whom I devoted my conversation, while Mary went out to buy some gloves. A few minutes, of course, did for Sittingbourne; and so off we drove, drove, drove, and by six o'clock were at Godmersham.

Our two brothers were walking before the house as we approached, as natural as life. Fanny and Lizzy met us in the Hall with a great deal of pleasant joy; we went for a few minutes into the breakfast-parlor, and then proceeded to our rooms. Mary has the Hall chamber. I am in the Yellow room — very literally — for I am writing in it at this moment. It seems odd to me to have such a great place all to myself, and to be at Godmersham without you is also odd.

You are wished for, I assure you: Fanny, who came to me as soon as she had seen her Aunt James to her room, and stayed while I dressed, was as energetic as usual in her longings for you. She is grown both in height and size since last year, but not immoderately, looks very well, and

seems as to conduct and manner just what she was and what one could wish her to continue.

Elizabeth,[1] who was dressing when we arrived, came to me for a minute attended by Marianne, Charles, and Louisa, and, you will not doubt, gave me a very affectionate welcome. That I had received such from Edward also I need not mention; but I do, you see, because it is a pleasure. I never saw him look in better health, and Fanny says he is perfectly well. I cannot praise Elizabeth's looks, but they are probably affected by a cold. Her little namesake has gained in beauty in the last three years, though not all that Marianne has lost. Charles is not quite so lovely as he was. Louisa is much as I expected, and Cassandra I find handsomer than I expected, though at present disguised by such a violent breaking-out that she does not come down after dinner. She has charming eyes and a nice open countenance, and seems likely to be very lovable. Her size is magnificent.

I was agreeably surprised to find Louisa Bridges still here. She looks remarkably well (legacies are very wholesome diet), and is just what she always was. John is at Sandling. You may fancy our dinner-party therefore; Fanny, of course, belonging to it, and little Edward, for that day. He was almost too happy, his happiness at least made him too talkative.

[1] Mrs. Edward Austen.

It has struck ten; I must go to breakfast.

Since breakfast I have had a *tête-à-tête* with Edward in his room; he wanted to know James's plans and mine, and from what his own now are I think it already nearly certain that I shall return when they do, though not with them. Edward will be going about the same time to Alton, where he has business with Mr. Trimmer, and where he means his son should join him; and I shall probably be his companion to that place, and get on afterwards somehow or other.

I should have preferred a rather longer stay here certainly, but there is no prospect of any later conveyance for me, as he does not mean to accompany Edward on his return to Winchester, from a very natural unwillingness to leave Elizabeth at that time. I shall at any rate be glad not to be obliged to be an incumbrance on those who have brought me here, for, as James has no horse, I must feel in their carriage that I am taking his place. We were rather crowded yesterday, though it does not become me to say so, as I and my boa were of the party, and it is not to be supposed but that a child of three years of age was fidgety.

I need scarcely beg you to keep all this to yourself, lest it should get round by Anna's means. She is very kindly inquired after by her friends here, who all regret her not coming with her father and mother.

I left Henry, I hope, free from his tiresome complaint, in other respects well, and thinking with great pleasure of Cheltenham and Stoneleigh.

The brewery scheme is quite at an end: at a meeting of the subscribers last week it was by general, and I believe very hearty, consent dissolved.

The country is very beautiful. I saw as much as ever to admire in my yesterday's journey. . . .

XXV.

Castle Square, October 13.

My dearest Cassandra, — I have received your letter, and with most melancholy anxiety was it expected, for the sad news[1] reached us last night, but without any particulars. It came in a short letter to Martha from her sister, begun at Steventon and finished in Winchester.

We have felt, we do feel, for you all, as you will not need to be told, — for you, for Fanny, for Henry, for Lady Bridges, and for dearest Edward, whose loss and whose sufferings seem to make those of every other person nothing. God be praised that you can say what you do of him: that he has a religious mind to bear him up, and a disposition that will gradually lead him to comfort.

[1] The death of Mrs. Edward Austen.

My dear, dear Fanny, I am so thankful that she has you with her! You will be everything to her; you will give her all the consolation that human aid can give. May the Almighty sustain you all, and keep you, my dearest Cassandra, well; but for the present I dare say you are equal to everything.

You will know that the poor boys are at Steventon. Perhaps it is best for them, as they will have more means of exercise and amusement there than they could have with us, but I own myself disappointed by the arrangement. I should have loved to have them with me at such a time. I shall write to Edward by this post.

We shall, of course, hear from you again very soon, and as often as you can write. We will write as you desire, and I shall add Bookham. Hamstall, I suppose, you write to yourselves, as you do not mention it.

What a comfort that Mrs. Deedes is saved from present misery and alarm! But it will fall heavy upon poor Harriot; and as for Lady B., but that her fortitude does seem truly great, I should fear the effect of such a blow, and so unlooked for. I long to hear more of you all. Of Henry's anguish I think with grief and solicitude; but he will exert himself to be of use and comfort.

With what true sympathy our feelings are shared by Martha you need not be told; she is the friend and sister under every circumstance.

We need not enter into a panegyric on the departed, but it is sweet to think of her great worth, of her solid principles, of her true devotion, her excellence in every relation of life. It is also consolatory to reflect on the shortness of the sufferings which led her from this world to a better.

Farewell for the present, my dearest sister. Tell Edward that we feel for him and pray for him.

Yours affectionately,

J. Austen.

I will write to Catherine.

Perhaps you can give me some directions about mourning.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXVI.

Castle Square, Saturday night (October 15).

My dear Cassandra, — Your accounts make us as comfortable as we can expect to be at such a time. Edward's loss is terrible, and must be felt as such, and these are too early days indeed to think of moderation in grief, either in him or his afflicted daughter, but soon we may hope that our dear Fanny's sense of duty to that beloved father will rouse her to exertion. For his sake,

and as the most acceptable proof of love to the spirit of her departed mother, she will try to be tranquil and resigned. Does she feel you to be a comfort to her, or is she too much overpowered for anything but solitude?

Your account of Lizzy is very interesting. Poor child! One must hope the impression will be strong, and yet one's heart aches for a dejected mind of eight years old.

I suppose you see the corpse? How does it appear? We are anxious to be assured that Edward will not attend the funeral, but when it comes to the point I think he must feel it impossible.

Your parcel shall set off on Monday, and I hope the shoes will fit; Martha and I both tried them on. I shall send you such of your mourning as I think most likely to be useful, reserving for myself your stockings and half the velvet, in which selfish arrangement I know I am doing what you wish.

I am to be in bombazeen and crape, according to what we are told is universal here, and which agrees with Martha's previous observation. My mourning, however, will not impoverish me, for by having my velvet pelisse fresh lined and made up, I am sure I shall have no occasion this winter for anything new of that sort. I take my cloak for the lining, and shall send yours on the chance

of its doing something of the same for you, though I believe your pelisse is in better repair than mine. One Miss Baker makes my gown and the other my bonnet, which is to be silk covered with crape.

I have written to Edward Cooper, and hope he will not send one of his letters of cruel comfort to my poor brother: and yesterday I wrote to Alethea Bigg, in reply to a letter from her. She tells us in confidence that Catherine is to be married on Tuesday se'nnight. Mr. Hill is expected at Manydown in the course of the ensuing week.

We are desired by Mrs. Harrison and Miss Austen to say everything proper for them to yourself and Edward on this sad occasion, especially that nothing but a wish of not giving additional trouble where so much is inevitable prevents their writing themselves to express their concern. They seem truly to feel concern.

I am glad you can say what you do of Mrs. Knight and of Goodnestone in general. It is a great relief to me to know that the shock did not make any of them ill. But what a task was yours to announce it! Now I hope you are not overpowered with letter-writing, as Henry and John can ease you of many of your correspondents.

Was Mr. Scudamore in the house at the time, was any application attempted, and is the seizure at all accounted for?

Sunday. — As Edward's letter to his son is not come here, we know that you must have been informed as early as Friday of the boys being at Steventon, which I am glad of.

Upon your letter to Dr. Goddard's being forwarded to them, Mary wrote to ask whether my mother wished to have her grandsons sent to her. We decided on their remaining where they were, which I hope my brother will approve of. I am sure he will do us the justice of believing that in such a decision we sacrificed inclination to what we thought best.

I shall write by the coach to-morrow to Mrs. J. A., and to Edward, about their mourning, though this day's post will probably bring directions to them on that subject from yourselves. I shall certainly make use of the opportunity of addressing our nephew on the most serious of all concerns, as I naturally did in my letter to him before. The poor boys are, perhaps, more comfortable at Steventon than they could be here, but you will understand my feelings with espect to it.

To-morrow will be a dreadful day for you all. Mr. Whitfield's will be a severe duty.[1] Glad shall I be to hear that it is over.

That you are forever in our thoughts you will not doubt. I see your mournful party in my

[1] Mr. Whitfield was the Rector of Godmersham at this time, having come there in 1778.

mind's eye under every varying circumstance of the day; and in the evening especially figure to myself its sad gloom: the efforts to talk, the frequent summons to melancholy orders and cares, and poor Edward, restless in misery, going from one room to another, and perhaps not seldom upstairs, to see all that remains of his Elizabeth. Dearest Fanny must now look upon herself as his prime source of comfort, his dearest friend; as the being who is gradually to supply to him, to the extent that is possible, what he has lost. This consideration will elevate and cheer her.

Adieu. You cannot write too often, as I said before. We are heartily rejoiced that the poor baby gives you no particular anxiety. Kiss dear Lizzy for us. Tell Fanny that I shall write in a day or two to Miss Sharpe.

My mother is not ill.

Yours most truly, J. Austen.

Tell Henry that a hamper of apples is gone to him from Kintbury, and that Mr. Fowle intended writing on Friday (supposing him in London) to beg that the charts, etc., may be consigned to the care of the Palmers. Mrs. Fowle has also written to Miss Palmer to beg she will send for them.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXVII.

Castle Square, Monday (October 24).

My dear Cassandra, — Edward and George came to us soon after seven on Saturday, very well, but very cold, having by choice travelled on the outside, and with no greatcoat but what Mr. Wise, the coachman, good-naturedly spared them of his, as they sat by his side. They were so much chilled when they arrived, that I was afraid they must have taken cold; but it does not seem at all the case: I never saw them looking better.

They behave extremely well in every respect, showing quite as much feeling as one wishes to see, and on every occasion speaking of their father with the liveliest affection. His letter was read over by each of them yesterday, and with many tears; George sobbed aloud, Edward's tears do not flow so easily; but as far as I can judge they are both very properly impressed by what has happened. Miss Lloyd, who is a more impartial judge than I can be, is exceedingly pleased with them.

George is almost a new acquaintance to me, and I find him in a different way as engaging as Edward.

We do not want amusement: bilbocatch, at which George is indefatigable, spillikins, paper ships, riddles, conundrums, and cards, with watch-

ing the flow and ebb of the river, and now and then a stroll out, keep us well employed; and we mean to avail ourselves of our kind papa's consideration, by not returning to Winchester till quite the evening of Wednesday.

Mrs. J. A. had not time to get them more than one suit of clothes; their others are making here, and though I do not believe Southampton is famous for tailoring, I hope it will prove itself better than Basingstoke. Edward has an old black coat, which will save his having a second new one; but I find that black pantaloons are considered by them as necessary, and of course one would not have them made uncomfortable by the want of what is usual on such occasions.

Fanny's letter was received with great pleasure yesterday, and her brother sends his thanks and will answer it soon. We all saw what she wrote, and were very much pleased with it.

To-morrow I hope to hear from you, and to-morrow we must think of poor Catherine. To-day Lady Bridges is the heroine of our thoughts, and glad shall we be when we can fancy the meeting over. There will then be nothing so very bad for Edward to undergo.

The "St. Albans," I find, sailed on the very day of my letters reaching Yarmouth, so that we must not expect an answer at present; we scarcely feel, however, to be in suspense, or only enough to keep

our plans to ourselves. We have been obliged to explain them to our young visitors, in consequence of Fanny's letter, but we have not yet mentioned them to Steventon. We are all quite familiarized to the idea ourselves; my mother only wants Mrs. Seward to go out at midsummer.

What sort of a kitchen garden is there? Mrs. J. A. expresses her fear of our settling in Kent, and, till this proposal was made, we began to look forward to it here; my mother was actually talking of a house at Wye. It will be best, however, as it is.

Anne has just given her mistress warning; she is going to be married; I wish she would stay her year.

On the subject of matrimony, I must notice a wedding in the Salisbury paper, which has amused me very much, Dr. Phillot to Lady Frances St. Lawrence. She wanted to have a husband, I suppose, once in her life, and he a Lady Frances.

I hope your sorrowing party were at church yesterday, and have no longer that to dread. Martha was kept at home by a cold, but I went with my two nephews, and I saw Edward was much affected by the sermon, which, indeed, I could have supposed purposely addressed to the afflicted, if the text had not naturally come in the course of Dr. Mant's observations on the Litany: 'All that are in danger, necessity, or tribulation,' was the sub-

ject of it. The weather did not allow us afterwards to get farther than the quay, where George was very happy as long as we could stay, flying about from one side to the other, and skipping on board a collier immediately.

In the evening we had the Psalms and Lessons, and a sermon at home, to which they were very attentive; but you will not expect to hear that they did not return to conundrums the moment it was over. Their aunt has written pleasantly of them, which was more than I hoped.

While I write now, George is most industriously making and naming paper ships, at which he afterwards shoots with horse-chestnuts, brought from Steventon on purpose; and Edward equally intent over the "Lake of Killarney," twisting himself about in one of our great chairs.

Tuesday. — Your close-written letter makes me quite ashamed of my wide lines; you have sent me a great deal of matter, most of it very welcome. As to your lengthened stay, it is no more than I expected, and what must be, but you cannot suppose I like it.

All that you say of Edward is truly comfortable; I began to fear that when the bustle of the first week was over, his spirits might for a time be more depressed; and perhaps one must still expect something of the kind. If you escape a bilious attack, I shall wonder almost as much as rejoice. I

am glad you mentioned where Catherine goes to-day; it is a good plan, but sensible people may generally be trusted to form such.

The day began cheerfully, but it is not likely to continue what it should, for them or for us. We had a little water-party yesterday; I and my two nephews went from the Itchen Ferry up to Northam, where we landed, looked into the 74, and walked home, and it was so much enjoyed that I had intended to take them to Netley to-day; the tide is just right for our going immediately after moonshine, but I am afraid there will be rain; if we cannot get so far, however, we may perhaps go round from the ferry to the quay.

I had not proposed doing more than cross the Itchen yesterday, but it proved so pleasant, and so much to the satisfaction of all, that when we reached the middle of the stream we agreed to be rowed up the river; both the boys rowed great part of the way, and their questions and remarks, as well as their enjoyment, were very amusing; George's inquiries were endless, and his eagerness in everything reminds me often of his uncle Henry.

Our evening was equally agreeable in its way: I introduced speculation, and it was so much approved that we hardly knew how to leave off.

Your idea of an early dinner to-morrow is ex-

actly what we propose, for, after writing the first part of this letter, it came into my head that at this time of year we have not summer evenings. We shall watch the light to-day, that we may not give them a dark drive to-morrow.

They send their best love to papa and everybody, with George's thanks for the letter brought by this post. Martha begs my brother may be assured of her interest in everything relating to him and his family, and of her sincerely partaking our pleasure in the receipt of every good account from Godmersham.

Of Chawton I think I can have nothing more to say, but that everything you say about it in the letter now before me will, I am sure, as soon as I am able to read it to her, make my mother consider the plan with more and more pleasure. We had formed the same views on H. Digweed's farm.

A very kind and feeling letter is arrived to-day from Kintbury. Mrs. Fowle's sympathy and solicitude on such an occasion you will be able to do justice to, and to express it as she wishes to my brother. Concerning you, she says: "Cassandra will, I know, excuse my writing to her; it is not to save myself but her that I omit so doing. Give my best, my kindest love to her, and tell her I feel for her as I know she would for me on the same occasion, and that I most sincerely hope her health will not suffer."

We have just had two hampers of apples from Kintbury, and the floor of our little garret is almost covered. Love to all.

Yours very affectionately, **J. A.**

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXVIII.

Castle Square, Sunday (November 21).

Your letter, my dear Cassandra, obliges me to write immediately, that you may have the earliest notice of Frank's intending, if possible, to go to Godmersham exactly at the time now fixed for your visit to Goodnestone.

He resolved, almost directly on the receipt of your former letter, to try for an extension of his leave of absence, that he might be able to go down to you for two days, but charged me not to give you any notice of it, on account of the uncertainty of success. Now, however, I must give it, and now perhaps he may be giving it himself; for I am just in the hateful predicament of being obliged to write what I know will somehow or other be of no use.

He meant to ask for five days more, and if they were granted, to go down by Thursday night's mail, and spend Friday and Saturday with you; and he considered his chance of succeeding by no means bad. I hope it will take place as he planned,

and that your arrangements with Goodnestone may admit of suitable alteration.

Your news of Edward Bridges was quite news, for I have had no letter from Wrotham. I wish him happy with all my heart, and hope his choice may turn out according to his own expectations, and beyond those of his family; and I dare say it will. Marriage is a great improver, and in a similar situation Harriet may be as amiable as Eleanor. As to money, that will come, you may be sure, because they cannot do without it. When you see him again, pray give him our congratulations and best wishes. This match will certainly set John and Lucy going.

There are six bedchambers at Chawton; Henry wrote to my mother the other day, and luckily mentioned the number, which is just what we wanted to be assured of. He speaks also of garrets for store-places, one of which she immediately planned fitting up for Edward's man-servant; and now perhaps it must be for our own; for she is already quite reconciled to our keeping one. The difficulty of doing without one had been thought of before. His name shall be Robert, if you please.

Before I can tell you of it, you will have heard that Miss Sawbridge is married. It took place, I believe, on Thursday. Mrs. Fowle has for some time been in the secret, but the neighborhood in

general were quite unsuspicious. Mr. Maxwell was tutor to the young Gregorys, — consequently, they must be one of the happiest couples in the world, and either of them worthy of envy, for she must be excessively in love, and he mounts from nothing to a comfortable home. Martha has heard him very highly spoken of. They continue for the present at Speen Hill.

I have a Southampton match to return for your Kentish one, Captain G. Heathcote and Miss A. Lyell. I have it from Alethea, and like it, because I had made it before.

Yes, the Stoneleigh business is concluded, but it was not till yesterday that my mother was regularly informed of it, though the news had reached us on Monday evening by way of Steventon. My aunt says as little as may be on the subject by way of information, and nothing at all by way of satisfaction. She reflects on Mr. T. Leigh's dilatoriness, and looks about with great diligence and success for inconvenience and evil, among which she ingeniously places the danger of her new housemaids catching cold on the outside of the coach, when she goes down to Bath, for a carriage makes her sick.

John Binns has been offered their place, but declines it; as she supposes, because he will not wear a livery. Whatever be the cause, I like the effect.

In spite of all my mother's long and intimate knowledge of the writer, she was not up to the expectation of such a letter as this; the discontentedness of it shocked and surprised her — but I see nothing in it out of nature, though a sad nature.

She does not forget to wish for Chambers, you may be sure. No particulars are given, not a word of arrears mentioned, though in her letter to James they were in a general way spoken of. The amount of them is a matter of conjecture, and to my mother a most interesting one; she cannot fix any time for their beginning with any satisfaction to herself but Mrs. Leigh's death, and Henry's two thousand pounds neither agrees with that period nor any other. I did not like to own our previous information of what was intended last July, and have therefore only said that if we could see Henry we might hear many particulars, as I had understood that some confidential conversation had passed between him and Mr. T. L. at Stoneleigh.

We have been as quiet as usual since Frank and Mary left us; Mr. Criswick called on Martha that very morning on his way home again from Portsmouth, and we have had no visitor since.

We called on the Miss Lyells one day, and heard a good account of Mr. Heathcote's canvass, the success of which, of course, exceeds his expectations. Alethea in her letter hopes for my interest, which I conclude means Edward's, and I take

this opportunity, therefore, of requesting that he will bring in Mr. Heathcote. Mr. Lane told us yesterday that Mr. H. had behaved very handsomely, and waited on Mr. Thistlethwaite, to say that if he (Mr. T.) would stand, he (Mr. H.) would not oppose him; but Mr. T. declined it, acknowledging himself still smarting under the payment of late electioneering costs.

The Mrs. Hulberts, we learn from Kintbury, come to Steventon this week, and bring Mary Jane Fowle with them on her way to Mrs. Nune's; she returns at Christmas with her brother.

Our brother we may perhaps see in the course of a few days, and we mean to take the opportunity of his help to go one night to the play. Martha ought to see the inside of the theatre once while she lives in Southampton, and I think she will hardly wish to take a second view.

The furniture of Bellevue is to be sold to-morrow, and we shall take it in our usual walk, if the weather be favorable.

How could you have a wet day on Thursday? With us it was a prince of days, the most delightful we have had for weeks; soft, bright, with a brisk wind from the southwest; everybody was out and talking of spring, and Martha and I did not know how to turn back. On Friday evening we had some very blowing weather, — from six to nine; I think we never heard it worse, even here. And

one night we had so much rain that it forced its way again into the store-closet; and though the evil was comparatively slight and the mischief nothing, I had some employment the next day in drying parcels, etc. I have now moved still more out of the way.

Martha sends her best love, and thanks you for admitting her to the knowledge of the pros and cons about Harriet Foote; she has an interest in all such matters. I am also to say that she wants to see you. Mary Jane missed her papa and mamma a good deal at first, but now does very well without them. I am glad to hear of little John's being better, and hope your accounts of Mrs. Knight will also improve. Adieu! remember me affectionately to everybody, and believe me,

Ever yours, J. A.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXIX.

Castle Square, Friday (December 9).

Many thanks, my dear Cassandra, to you and Mr. Deedes for your joint and agreeable composition, which took me by surprise this morning. He has certainly great merit as a writer; he does ample justice to his subject, and without being diffuse is clear and correct; and though I do not

mean to compare his epistolary powers with yours, or to give him the same portion of my gratitude, he certainly has a very pleasing way of winding up a whole, and speeding truth into the world.

"But all this," as my dear Mrs. Piozzi says, "is flight and fancy and nonsense, for my master has his great casks to mind and I have my little children." It is you, however, in this instance, that have the little children, and I that have the great cask, for we are brewing spruce beer again; but my meaning really is, that I am extremely foolish in writing all this unnecessary stuff when I have so many matters to write about that my paper will hardly hold it all. Little matters they are, to be sure, but highly important.

In the first place, Miss Curling is actually at Portsmouth, which I was always in hopes would not happen. I wish her no worse, however, than a long and happy abode there. Here she would probably be dull, and I am sure she would be troublesome.

The bracelets are in my possession, and everything I could wish them to be. They came with Martha's pelisse, which likewise gives great satisfaction.

Soon after I had closed my last letter to you we were visited by Mrs. Dickens and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bertie, the wife of a lately made Admiral. Mrs. F. A.,[1] I believe, was their first object, but

[1] Frank Austen.

they put up with us very kindly, and Mrs. D., finding in Miss Lloyd a friend of Mrs. Dundas, had another motive for the acquaintance. She seems a really agreeable woman, — that is, her manners are gentle, and she knows a great many of our connections in West Kent. Mrs. Bertie lives in the Polygon, and was out when we returned her visit, which are her two virtues.

A larger circle of acquaintance, and an increase of amusement, is quite in character with our approaching removal. Yes, I mean to go to as many balls as possible, that I may have a good bargain. Everybody is very much concerned at our going away, and everybody is acquainted with Chawton, and speaks of it as a remarkably pretty village, and everybody knows the house we describe, but nobody fixes on the right.

I am very much obliged to Mrs. Knight for such a proof of the interest she takes in me, and she may depend upon it that I will marry Mr. Papillon, whatever may be his reluctance or my own. I owe her much more than such a trifling sacrifice.

Our ball was rather more amusing than I expected. Martha liked it very much, and I did not gape till the last quarter of an hour. It was past nine before we were sent for, and not twelve when we returned. The room was tolerably full, and there were, perhaps, thirty couple of dancers. The

melancholy part was to see so many dozen young women standing by without partners, and each of them with two ugly naked shoulders.

It was the same room in which we danced fifteen years ago. I thought it all over, and in spite of the shame of being so much older, felt with thankfulness that I was quite as happy now as then. We paid an additional shilling for our tea, which we took as we chose in an adjoining and very comfortable room.

There were only four dances, and it went to my heart that the Miss Lances (one of them, too, named Emma) should have partners only for two. You will not expect to hear that I was asked to dance, but I was — by the gentleman whom we met that Sunday with Captain D'Auvergne. We have always kept up a bowing acquaintance since, and, being pleased with his black eyes, I spoke to him at the ball, which brought on me this civility; but I do not know his name, and he seems so little at home in the English language that I believe his black eyes may be the best of him. Captain D'Auvergne has got a ship.

Martha and I made use of the very favorable state of yesterday for walking, to pay our duty at Chiswell. We found Mrs. Lance at home and alone, and sat out three other ladies who soon came in. We went by the ferry, and returned by the bridge, and were scarcely at all fatigued.

Edward must have enjoyed the last two days. You, I presume, had a cool drive to Canterbury. Kitty Foote came on Wednesday; and her evening visit began early enough for the last part, the apple-pie, of our dinner, for we never dine now till five.

Yesterday I — or rather, you — had a letter from Nanny Hilliard, the object of which is that she would be very much obliged to us if we would get Hannah a place. I am sorry that I cannot assist her; if you can, let me know, as I shall not answer the letter immediately. Mr. Sloper is married again, not much to Nanny's, or anybody's satisfaction. The lady was governess to Sir Robert's natural children, and seems to have nothing to recommend her. I do not find, however, that Nanny is likely to lose her place in consequence. She says not a word of what service she wishes for Hannah, or what Hannah can do; but a nursery, I suppose, or something of that kind, must be the thing.

Having now cleared away my smaller articles of news, I come to a communication of some weight; no less than that my uncle and aunt[1] are going to allow James 100*l.* a year. We hear of it through Steventon. Mary sent us the other day an extract from my aunt's letter on the subject, in which the donation is made with the greatest kindness, and intended as a compensation for his loss

[1] Mr. and Mrs Leigh Perrot.

in the conscientious refusal of Hampstead living; 100*l.* a year being all that he had at the time called its worth, as I find it was always intended at Steventon to divide the real income with Kintbury.

Nothing can be more affectionate than my aunt's language in making the present, and likewise in expressing her hope of their being much more together in future than, to her great regret, they have of late years been. My expectations for my mother do not rise with this event. We will allow a little more time, however, before we fly out.

If not prevented by parish business, James comes to us on Monday. The Mrs. Hulberts and Miss Murden are their guests at present, and likely to continue such till Christmas. Anna comes home on the 19th. The hundred a year begins next Lady-day.

I am glad you are to have Henry with you again; with him and the boys you cannot but have a cheerful, and at times even a merry, Christmas. Martha is so [*MSS. torn*] . . . We want to be settled at Chawton in time for Henry to come to us for some shooting in October, at least, or a little earlier, and Edward may visit us after taking his boys back to Winchester. Suppose we name the 4th of September. Will not that do?

I have but one thing more to tell you. Mrs. Hill called on my mother yesterday while we were

gone to Chiswell, and in the course of the visit asked her whether she knew anything of a clergyman's family of the name of Alford, who had resided in our part of Hampshire. Mrs. Hill had been applied to as likely to give some information of them on account of their probable vicinity to Dr. Hill's living by a lady, or for a lady, who had known Mrs. and the two Miss Alfords in Bath, whither they had removed it seems from Hampshire, and who now wishes to convey to the Miss Alfords some work or trimming which she has been doing for them; but the mother and daughters have left Bath, and the lady cannot learn where they are gone to. While my mother gave us the account, the probability of its being ourselves occurred to us, and it had previously struck herself . . . what makes it more likely, and even indispensably to be us, is that she mentioned Mr. Hammond as now having the living or curacy which the father had had. I cannot think who our kind lady can be, but I dare say we shall not like the work.

Distribute the affectionate love of a heart not so tired as the right hand belonging to it.

Yours ever sincerely, J. A.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXX.

Castle Square, Tuesday (December 27).

My dear Cassandra, — I can now write at leisure and make the most of my subjects, which is lucky, as they are not numerous this week.

Our house was cleared by half-past eleven on Saturday, and we had the satisfaction of hearing yesterday that the party reached home in safety soon after five.

I was very glad of your letter this morning; for, my mother taking medicine, Eliza keeping her bed with a cold, and Choles not coming, made us rather dull and dependent on the post. You tell me much that gives me pleasure, but I think not much to answer. I wish I could help you in your needlework. I have two hands and a new thimble that lead a very easy life.

Lady Sondes' match surprises, but does not offend me; had her first marriage been of affection, or had there been a grown-up single daughter, I should not have forgiven her; but I consider everybody as having a right to marry once in their lives for love, if they can, and provided she will now leave off having bad headaches and being pathetic, I can allow her, I can wish her, to be happy.

Do not imagine that your picture of your *tête-à-tête* with Sir B. makes any change in our expectations here; he could not be really reading,

though he held the newspaper in his hand; he was making up his mind to the deed, and the manner of it. I think you will have a letter from him soon.

I heard from Portsmouth yesterday, and as I am to send them more clothes, they cannot be expecting a very early return to us. Mary's face is pretty well, but she must have suffered a great deal with it; an abscess was formed and opened.

Our evening party on Thursday produced nothing more remarkable than Miss Murden's coming too, though she had declined it absolutely in the morning, and sitting very ungracious and very silent with us from seven o'clock till half after eleven, for so late was it, owing to the chairmen, before we got rid of them.

The last hour, spent in yawning and shivering in a wide circle round the fire, was dull enough, but the tray had admirable success. The widgeon and the preserved ginger were as delicious as one could wish. But as to our black butter, do not decoy anybody to Southampton by such a lure, for it is all gone. The first pot was opened when Frank and Mary were here, and proved not at all what it ought to be; it was neither solid nor entirely sweet, and on seeing it, Eliza remembered that Miss Austen had said she did not think it had been boiled enough. It was made, you know, when we were absent. Such being the event of

the first pot, I would not save the second, and we therefore ate it in unpretending privacy; and though not what it ought to be, part of it was very good.

James means to keep three horses on this increase of income; at present he has but one. Mary wishes the other two to be fit to carry women, and in the purchase of one Edward will probably be called upon to fulfil his promise to his godson. We have now pretty well ascertained James's income to be eleven hundred pounds, curate paid, which makes us very happy, — the ascertainment as well as the income.

Mary does not talk of the garden; it may well be a disagreeable subject to her, but her husband is persuaded that nothing is wanting to make the first new one good but trenching, which is to be done by his own servants and John Bond, by degrees, not at the expense which trenching the other amounted to.

I was happy to hear, chiefly for Anna's sake, that a ball at Manydown was once more in agitation; it is called a child's ball, and given by Mrs. Heathcote to Wm. Such was its beginning at least, but it will probably swell into something more. Edward was invited during his stay at Manydown, and it is to take place between this and Twelfth-day. Mrs. Hulbert has taken Anna a pair of white shoes on the occasion.

I forgot in my last to tell you that we hear, by way of Kintbury and the Palmers, that they were all well at Bermuda in the beginning of Nov.

Wednesday. — Yesterday must have been a day of sad remembrance at Gm.[1] I am glad it is over. We spent Friday evening with our friends at the boarding-house, and our curiosity was gratified by the sight of their fellow-inmates, Mrs. Drew and Miss Hook, Mr. Wynne and Mr. Fitzhugh; the latter is brother to Mrs. Lance, and very much the gentleman. He has lived in that house more than twenty years, and, poor man! is so totally deaf that they say he could not hear a cannon, were it fired close to him; having no cannon at hand to make the experiment, I took it for granted, and talked to him a little with my fingers, which was funny enough. I recommended him to read "Corinna."

Miss Hook is a well-behaved, genteelish woman; Mrs. Drew well behaved, without being at all genteel. Mr. Wynne seems a chatty and rather familiar young man. Miss Murden was quite a different creature this last evening from what she had been before, owing to her having with Martha's help found a situation in the morning, which bids very fair for comfort. When she leaves Steventon, she comes to board and lodge with Mrs. Hookey, the chemist — for there is no Mr. Hookey.

[1] Godmersham, Edward Austen's place.

I cannot say that I am in any hurry for the conclusion of her present visit, but I was truly glad to see her comfortable in mind and spirits; at her age, perhaps, one may be as friendless oneself, and in similar circumstances quite as captious.

My mother has been lately adding to her possessions in plate, — a whole tablespoon and a whole dessert-spoon, and six whole teaspoons, — which makes our sideboard border on the magnificent. They were mostly the produce of old or useless silver. I have turned the 11*s.* in the list into 12*s.*, and the card looks all the better; a silver tea-ladle is also added, which will at least answer the purpose of making us sometimes think of John Warren.

I have laid Lady Sondes' case before Martha, who does not make the least objection to it, and is particularly pleased with the name of Montresor. I do not agree with her there, but I like his rank very much, and always affix the ideas of strong sense and highly elegant manners to a general.

I must write to Charles next week. You may guess in what extravagant terms of praise Earle Harwood speaks of him. He is looked up to by everybody in all America.

I shall not tell you anything more of Wm. Digweed's china, as your silence on the subject makes you unworthy of it. Mrs. H. Digweed looks forward with great satisfaction to our being her

neighbors. I would have her enjoy the idea to the utmost, as I suspect there will not be much in the reality. With equal pleasure we anticipate an intimacy with her husband's bailiff and his wife, who live close by us, and are said to be remarkably good sort of people.

Yes, yes, we will have a pianoforte, as good a one as can be got for thirty guineas, and I will practise country dances, that we may have some amusement for our nephews and nieces, when we have the pleasure of their company.

Martha sends her love to Henry, and tells him that he will soon have a bill of Miss Chaplin's, about 14*l.*, to pay on her account; but the bill shall not be sent in till his return to town. I hope he comes to you in good health, and in spirits as good as a first return to Godmersham can allow. With his nephews he will force himself to be cheerful, till he really is so. Send me some intelligence of Eliza; it is a long while since I have heard of her.

We have had snow on the ground here almost a week; it is now going, but Southampton must boast no longer. We all send our love to Edward junior and his brothers, and I hope Speculation is generally liked.

Fare you well.

Yours affectionately,

J. Austen.

My mother has not been out of doors this week, but she keeps pretty well. We have received through Bookham an indifferent account of your godmother.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXI.

Castle Square, Tuesday (January 10, 1809).

I am not surprised, my dear Cassandra, that you did not find my last letter very full of matter, and I wish this may not have the same deficiency; but we are doing nothing ourselves to write about, and I am therefore quite dependent upon the communications of our friends, or my own wits.

This post brought me two interesting letters, yours and one from Bookham, in answer to an inquiry of mine about your good godmother, of whom we had lately received a very alarming account from Paragon. Miss Arnold was the informant then, and she spoke of Mrs. E. L. having been very dangerously ill, and attended by a physician from Oxford.

Your letter to Adlestrop may perhaps bring you information from the spot, but in case it should not, I must tell you that she is better; though Dr. Bourne cannot yet call her out of danger; such was the case last Wednesday, and Mrs. Cooke's having

had no later account is a favorable sign. I am to hear again from the latter next week, but not this, if everything goes on well.

Her disorder is an inflammation on the lungs, arising from a severe chill taken in church last Sunday three weeks; her mind all pious composure, as may be supposed. George Cooke was there when her illness began; his brother has now taken his place. Her age and feebleness considered, one's fears cannot but preponderate, though her amendment has already surpassed the expectation of the physician at the beginning. I am sorry to add that Becky is laid up with a complaint of the same kind.

I am very glad to have the time of your return at all fixed; we all rejoice in it, and it will not be later than I had expected. I dare not hope that Mary and Miss Curling may be detained at Portsmouth so long or half so long; but it would be worth twopence to have it so.

The "St. Albans" perhaps may soon be off to help bring home what may remain by this time of our poor army, whose state seems dreadfully critical. The "Regency" seems to have been heard of only here; my most political correspondents make no mention of it. Unlucky that I should have wasted so much reflection on the subject.

I can now answer your question to my mother more at large, and likewise more at small — with

equal perspicuity and minuteness; for the very day of our leaving Southampton is fixed; and if the knowledge is of no use to Edward, I am sure it will give him pleasure. Easter Monday, April 3, is the day; we are to sleep that night at Alton, and be with our friends at Bookham the next, if they are then at home; there we remain till the following Monday, and on Tuesday, April 11, hope to be at Godmersham. If the Cookes are absent, we shall finish our journey on the 5th. These plans depend of course upon the weather, but I hope there will be no settled cold to delay us materially.

To make you amends for being at Bookham, it is in contemplation to spend a few days at Baiton Lodge in our way out of Kent. The hint of such a visit is most affectionately welcomed by Mrs. Birch, in one of her odd pleasant letters lately, in which she speaks of us with the usual distinguished kindness, declaring that she shall not be at all satisfied unless a very handsome present is made us immediately from one quarter.

Fanny's not coming with you is no more than we expected; and as we have not the hope of a bed for her, and shall see her so soon afterwards at Godmersham, we cannot wish it otherwise.

William will be quite recovered, I trust, by the time you receive this. What a comfort his cross-stitch must have been! Pray tell him that I should

like to see his work very much. I hope our answers this morning have given satisfaction; we had great pleasure in Uncle Deedes' packet; and pray let Marianne know, in private, that I think she is quite right to work a rug for Uncle John's coffee urn, and that I am sure it must give great pleasure to herself now, and to him when he receives it.

The preference of Brag over Speculation does not greatly surprise me, I believe, because I feel the same myself; but it mortifies me deeply, because Speculation was under my patronage; and, after all, what is there so delightful in a pair royal of Braggers? It is but three nines or three knaves, or a mixture of them. When one comes to reason upon it, it cannot stand its ground against Speculation, — of which I hope Edward is now convinced. Give my love to him if he is.

The letter from Paragon before mentioned was much like those which had preceded it, as to the felicity of its writer. They found their house so dirty and so damp that they were obliged to be a week at an inn. John Binns had behaved most unhandsomely, and engaged himself elsewhere. They have a man, however, on the same footing, which my aunt does not like, and she finds both him and the new maid-servant very, very inferior to Robert and Martha. Whether they mean to have any other domestics does not appear, nor

whether they are to have a carriage while they are in Bath.

The Holders are as usual, though I believe it is not very usual for them to be happy, which they now are at a great rate, in Hooper's marriage. The Irvines are not mentioned. The American lady improved as we went on; but still the same faults in part recurred.

We are now in Margiana, and like it very well indeed. We are just going to set off for Northumberland to be shut up in Widdrington Tower, where there must be two or three sets of victims already immured under a very fine villain.

Wednesday. — Your report of Eliza's health gives me great pleasure, and the progress of the bank is a constant source of satisfaction. With such increasing profits, tell Henry that I hope he will not work poor High-Diddle so hard as he used to do.

Has your newspaper given a sad story of a Mrs. Middleton, wife of a farmer in Yorkshire, her sister, and servant, being almost frozen to death in the leat weather, her little child quite so? I hope the sister is not our friend Miss Woodd, and I rather think her brother-in-law had moved into Lincolnshire, but their name and station accord too well. Mrs. M. and the maid are said to be tolerably recovered, but the sister is likely to lose the use of her limbs.

Charles's rug will be finished to-day, and sent to-morrow to Frank, to be consigned by him to Mr. Turner's care; and I am going to send Marmion out with it, — very generous in me, I think.

As we have no letter from Adlestrop, we may suppose the good woman was alive on Monday, but I cannot help expecting bad news from thence or Bookham in a few days. Do you continue quite well?

Have you nothing to say of your little namesake? We join in love and many happy returns.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

The Manydown ball was a smaller thing than I expected, but it seems to have made Anna very happy. At her age it would not have done for me.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXII.

Castle Square, Tuesday (January 17).

My dear Cassandra, — I am happy to say that we had no second letter from Bookham last week. Yours has brought its usual measure of satisfaction and amusement, and I beg your acceptance of all the thanks due on the occasion. Your offer of cravats is very kind, and happens to be particularly adapted to my wants, but it was an odd thing to occur to you.

Yes, we have got another fall of snow, and are very dreadful; everything seems to turn to snow this winter.

I hope you have had no more illness among you, and that William will be soon as well as ever. His working a footstool for Chawton is a most agreeable surprise to me, and I am sure his grandmamma will value it very much as a proof of his affection and industry, but we shall never have the heart to put our feet upon it. I believe I must work a muslin cover in satin stitch to keep it from the dirt. I long to know what his colors are. I guess greens and purples.

Edward and Henry have started a difficulty respecting our journey, which, I must own with some confusion, had never been thought of by us; but if the former expected by it to prevent our travelling into Kent entirely, he will be disappointed, for we have already determined to go the Croydon road on leaving Bookham and sleep at Dartford. Will not that do? There certainly does seem no convenient resting-place on the other road.

Anna went to Clanville last Friday, and I have hopes of her new aunt's being really worth her knowing. Perhaps you may never have heard that James and Mary paid a morning visit there in form some weeks ago, and Mary, though by no means disposed to like her, was very much pleased

with her indeed. Her praise, to be sure, proves nothing more than Mrs. M.'s being civil and attentive to them, but her being so is in favor of her having good sense. Mary writes of Anna as improved in person, but gives her no other commendation. I am afraid her absence now may deprive her of one pleasure, for that silly Mr. Hammond is actually to give his ball on Friday.

We had some reason to expect a visit from Earle Harwood and James this week, but they do not come. Miss Murden arrived last night at Mrs. Hookey's, as a message and a basket announced to us. You will therefore return to an enlarged and, of course, improved society here, especially as the Miss Williamses are come back.

We were agreeably surprised the other day by a visit from your beauty and mine, each in a new cloth mantle and bonnet; and I dare say you will value yourself much on the modest propriety of Miss W.'s taste, hers being purple and Miss Grace's scarlet.

I can easily suppose that your six weeks here will be fully occupied, were it only in lengthening the waists of your gowns. I have pretty well arranged my spring and summer plans of that kind, and mean to wear out my spotted muslin before I go. You will exclaim at this, but mine really has signs of feebleness, which with a little care may come to something.

Martha and Dr. Mant are as bad as ever; he runs after her in the street to apologize for having spoken to a gentleman while she was near him the day before. Poor Mrs. Mant can stand it no longer; she is retired to one of her married daughters'.

When William returns to Winchester Mary Jane is to go to Mrs. Nune's for a month, and then to Steventon for a fortnight, and it seems likely that she and her aunt Martha may travel into Berkshire together.

We shall not have a month of Martha after your return, and that month will be a very interrupted and broken one, but we shall enjoy ourselves the more when we can get a quiet half-hour together.

To set against your new novel, of which nobody ever heard before, and perhaps never may again, we have got "Ida of Athens," by Miss Owenson, which must be very clever, because it was written, as the authoress says, in three months. We have only read the preface yet, but her Irish girl does not make me expect much. If the warmth of her language could affect the body, it might be worth reading in this weather.

Adieu! I must leave off to stir the fire and call on Miss Murden.

Evening. — I have done them both, the first very often. We found our friend as comfortable as she can ever allow herself to be in cold weather.

There is a very neat parlor behind the shop for her to sit in, not very light indeed, being *à la* Southampton, the middle of three deep, but very lively from the frequent sound of the pestle and mortar.

We afterwards called on the Miss Williamses, who lodge at Durantoy's. Miss Mary only was at home, and she is in very indifferent health. Dr. Hacket came in while we were there, and said that he never remembered such a severe winter as this in Southampton before. It is bad, but we do not suffer as we did last year, because the wind has been more N.E. than N.W.

For a day or two last week my mother was very poorly with a return of one of her old complaints, but it did not last long, and seems to have left nothing bad behind it. She began to talk of a serious illness, her two last having been preceded by the same symptoms, but, thank heaven! she is now quite as well as one can expect her to be in weather which deprives her of exercise.

Miss M. conveys to us a third volume of sermons, from Hamstall, just published, and which we are to like better than the two others; they are professedly practical, and for the use of country congregations. I have just received some verses in an unknown hand, and am desired to forward them to my nephew Edward at Godmersham.

Alas! poor Brag, thou boastful game!
What now avails thine empty name?
Where now thy more distinguished fame?
My day is o'er, and thine the same,
For thou, like me, art thrown aside
At Godmersham, this Christmastide;
And now across the table wide
Each game save brag or spec. is tried.
Such is the mild ejaculation
Of tender-hearted speculation.

Wednesday. — I expected to have a letter from somebody to-day, but I have not. Twice every day I think of a letter from Portsmouth.

Miss Murden has been sitting with us this morning. As yet she seems very well pleased with her situation. The worst part of her being in Southampton will be the necessity of one walking with her now and then, for she talks so loud that one is quite ashamed; but our dining hours are luckily very different, which we shall take all reasonable advantage of.

The Queen's birthday moves the assembly to this night instead of last, and as it is always fully attended, Martha and I expect an amusing show. We were in hopes of being independent of other companions by having the attendance of Mr. Austen and Captain Harwood; but as they fail us, we are obliged to look out for other help, and have fixed on the Wallops as least likely to be troublesome. I have called on them this morning and found them very willing, and I am sorry that

you must wait a whole week for the particulars of the evening. I propose being asked to dance by our acquaintance Mr. Smith, now *Captain* Smith, who has lately reappeared in Southampton, but I shall decline it. He saw Charles last August.

What an alarming bride Mrs. —— must have been; such a parade is one of the most immodest pieces of modesty that one can imagine. To attract notice could have been her only wish. It augurs ill for her family; it announces not great sense, and therefore insures boundless influence.

I hope Fanny's visit is now taking place. You have said scarcely anything of her lately, but I trust you are as good friends as ever.

Martha sends her love, and hopes to have the pleasure of seeing you when you return to Southampton. You are to understand this message as being merely for the sake of a message to oblige me.

Yours affectionately,

J. Austen.

Henry never sent his love to me in your last, but I send him mine.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXIII.

Castle Square, Tuesday (January 24).

My dear Cassandra, — I will give you the indulgence of a letter on Thursday this week, instead of Friday, but I do not require you to write again before Sunday, provided I may believe you and your finger going on quite well. Take care of your precious self; do not work too hard. Remember that Aunt Cassandras are quite as scarce as Miss Beverleys.[1]

I had the happiness yesterday of a letter from Charles, but I shall say as little about it as possible, because I know that excruciating Henry will have had a letter likewise, to make all my intelligence valueless. It was written at Bermuda on the 7th and 10th of December. All well, and Fanny still only in expectation of being otherwise. He had taken a small prize in his late cruise, — a French schooner, laden with sugar; but bad weather parted them, and she had not yet been heard of. His cruise ended December 1st. My September letter was the latest he had received.

This day three weeks you are to be in London, and I wish you better weather; not but that you may have worse, for we have now nothing but

[1] "Cecilia" Beverley, the heroine of Miss Burney's novel

ceaseless snow or rain and insufferable dirt to complain of; no tempestuous winds nor severity of cold. Since I wrote last we have had something of each, but it is not genteel to rip up old grievances.

You used me scandalously by not mentioning Edward Cooper's sermons. I tell you everything, and it is unknown the mysteries you conceal from me; and, to add to the rest, you persevere in giving a final "e" to "invalid," thereby putting it out of one's power to suppose Mrs. E. Leigh, even for a moment, a veteran soldier. She, good woman, is, I hope, destined for some further placid enjoyment of her own excellence in this world, for her recovery advances exceedingly well.

I had this pleasant news in a letter from Bookham last Thursday; but as the letter was from Mary instead of her mother, you will guess her account was not equally good from home. Mrs. Cooke had been confined to her bed some days by illness, but was then better, and Mary wrote in confidence of her continuing to mend. I have desired to hear again soon.

You rejoice me by what you say of Fanny.[1] I hope she will not turn good-for-nothing this ever so long. We thought of and talked of her yesterday with sincere affection, and wished her a long enjoyment of all the happiness to which she seems

[1] Fanny Austen, afterward Lady Edward Knatchbull.

born. While she gives happiness to those about her she is pretty sure of her own share.

I am gratified by her having pleasure in what I write, but I wish the knowledge of my being exposed to her discerning criticism may not hurt my style, by inducing too great a solicitude. I begin already to weigh my words and sentences more than I did, and am looking about for a sentiment, an illustration, or a metaphor in every corner of the room. Could my ideas flow as fast as the rain in the store-closet, it would be charming.

We have been in two or three dreadful states within the last week, from the melting of the snow, etc., and the contest between us and the closet has now ended in our defeat. I have been obliged to move almost everything out of it, and leave it to splash itself as it likes.

You have by no means raised my curiosity after Caleb. My disinclination for it before was affected, but now it is real. I do not like the evangelicals. Of course I shall be delighted when I read it, like other people; but till I do I dislike it.

I am sorry my verses did not bring any return from Edward. I was in hopes they might, but I suppose he does not rate them high enough. It might be partiality, but they seemed to me purely classical, — just like Homer and Virgil, Ovid and Propria que Maribus.

I had a nice brotherly letter from Frank the

other day, which, after an interval of nearly three weeks, was very welcome. No orders were come on Friday, and none were come yesterday, or we should have heard to-day. I had supposed Miss C. would share her cousin's room here, but a message in this letter proves the contrary. I will make the garret as comfortable as I can, but the possibilities of that apartment are not great.

My mother has been talking to Eliza about our future home, and she, making no difficulty at all of the sweetheart, is perfectly disposed to continue with us, but till she has written home for mother's approbation cannot quite decide. Mother does not like to have her so far off. At Chawton she will be nine or ten miles nearer, which I hope will have its due influence.

As for Sally, she means to play John Binns with us, in her anxiety to belong to our household again. Hitherto she appears a very good servant.

You depend upon finding all your plants dead, I hope. They look very ill, I understand.

Your silence on the subject of our ball makes me suppose your curiosity too great for words. We were very well entertained, and could have stayed longer but for the arrival of my list shoes to convey me home, and I did not like to keep them waiting in the cold. The room was tolerably full, and the ball opened by Miss Glyn. The Miss Lances had partners, Captain Dauvergne's friend

appeared in regimentals, Caroline Maitland had an officer to flirt with, and Mr. John Harrison was deputed by Captain Smith, being himself absent, to ask me to dance. Everything went well, you see, especially after we had tucked Mrs. Lance's neckerchief in behind and fastened it with a pin.

We had a very full and agreeable account of Mr. Hammond's ball from Anna last night; the same fluent pen has sent similar information, I know, into Kent. She seems to have been as happy as one could wish her, and the complacency of her mamma in doing the honors of the evening must have made her pleasure almost as great. The grandeur of the meeting was beyond my hopes. I should like to have seen Anna's looks and performance, but that sad cropped head must have injured the former.

Martha pleases herself with believing that if I had kept her counsel you would never have heard of Dr. M.'s late behavior, as if the very slight manner in which I mentioned it could have been all on which you found your judgment. I do not endeavor to undeceive her, because I wish her happy, at all events, and know how highly she prizes happiness of any kind. She is, moreover, so full of kindness for us both, and sends you in particular so many good wishes about your finger, that I am willing to overlook a venial fault, and as Dr. M. is a clergyman, their attachment, how-

ever immoral, has a decorous air. Adieu, sweet You. This is grievous news from Spain. It is well that Dr. Moore was spared the knowledge of such a son's death.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

Anna's hand gets better and better; it begins to be too good for any consequence.

We send best love to dear little Lizzy and Marianne in particular.

The Portsmouth paper gave a melancholy history of a poor mad woman, escaped from confinement, who said her husband and daughter, of the name of Payne, lived at Ashford, in Kent. Do you own them?

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXIV.

Castle Square, Monday (January 30).

My dear Cassandra, — I was not much surprised yesterday by the agreeable surprise of your letter, and extremely glad to receive the assurance of your finger being well again.

Here is such a wet day as never was seen. I wish the poor little girls had better weather for their journey; they must amuse themselves with watching the raindrops down the windows. Sackree, I suppose, feels quite broken-hearted. I can-

not have done with the weather without observing how delightfully mild it is; I am sure Fanny must enjoy it with us. Yesterday was a very blowing day; we got to church, however, which we had not been able to do for two Sundays before.

I am not at all ashamed about the name of the novel, having been guilty of no insult toward your handwriting; the diphthong I always saw, but knowing how fond you were of adding a vowel wherever you could, I attributed it to that alone, and the knowledge of the truth does the book no service; the only merit it could have was in the name of Caleb, which has an honest, unpretending sound, but in Cœlebs there is pedantry and affectation. Is it written only to classical scholars?

I shall now try to say only what is necessary, I am weary of meandering; so expect a vast deal of small matter, concisely told, in the next two pages.

Mrs. Cooke has been very dangerously ill, but is now, I hope, safe. I had a letter last week from George, Mary being too busy to write, and at that time the disorder was called of the typhus kind, and their alarm considerable, but yesterday brought me a much better account from Mary, the origin of the complaint being now ascertained to be bilious, and the strong medicines requisite promising to be effectual. Mrs. E. L. is so much

recovered as to get into the dressing-room every day.

A letter from Hamstall gives us the history of Sir Tho. Williams's return. The Admiral, whoever he might be, took a fancy to the "Neptune," and having only a worn-out 74 to offer in lieu of it, Sir Tho. declined such a command, and is come home passenger. Lucky man! to have so fair an opportunity of escape. I hope his wife allows herself to be happy on the occasion, and does not give all her thoughts to being nervous.

A great event happens this week at Hamstall in young Edward's removal to school. He is going to Rugby, and is very happy in the idea of it; I wish his happiness may last, but it will be a great change to become a raw school-boy from being a pompous sermon-writer and a domineering brother. It will do him good, I dare say.

Caroline has had a great escape from being burnt to death lately. As her husband gives the account, we must believe it true. Miss Murden is gone, — called away by the critical state of Mrs. Pottinger, who has had another severe stroke, and is without sense or speech. Miss Murden wishes to return to Southampton if circumstances suit, but it must be very doubtful.

We have been obliged to turn away Cholles, he grew so very drunken and negligent, and we have a man in his place called Thomas.

Martha desires me to communicate something concerning herself which she knows will give you pleasure, as affording her very particular satisfaction, — it is that she is to be in town this spring with Mrs. Dundas. I need not dilate on the subject. You understand enough of the whys and wherefores to enter into her feelings, and to be conscious that of all possible arrangements it is the one most acceptable to her. She goes to Barton on leaving us, and the family remove to town in April.

What you tell me of Miss Sharpe is quite new, and surprises me a little; I feel, however, as you do. She is born, poor thing! to struggle with evil, and her continuing with Miss B. is, I hope, a proof that matters are not always so very bad between them as her letters sometimes represent.

Jenny's marriage I had heard of, and supposed you would do so too from Steventon, as I knew you were corresponding with Mary at the time. I hope she will not sully the respectable name she now bears.

Your plan for Miss Curling is uncommonly considerate and friendly, and such as she must surely jump at. Edward's going round by Steventon, as I understand he promises to do, can be no reasonable objection; Mrs. J. Austen's hospitality is just of the kind to enjoy such a visitor.

We were very glad to know Aunt Fanny was

in the country when we read of the fire. Pray give my best compliments to the Mrs. Finches, if they are at Gm. I am sorry to find that Sir J. Moore has a mother living, but though a very heroic son he might not be a very necessary one to her happiness. Deacon Morrell may be more to Mrs. Morrell.

I wish Sir John had united something of the Christian with the hero in his death. Thank heaven! we have had no one to care for particularly among the troops, — no one, in fact, nearer to us than Sir John himself. Col. Maitland is safe and well; his mother and sisters were of course anxious about him, but there is no entering much into the solicitudes of that family.

My mother is well, and gets out when she can with the same enjoyment, and apparently the same strength, as hitherto. She hopes you will not omit begging Mrs. Seward to get the garden cropped for us, supposing she leaves the house too early to make the garden any object to herself. We are very desirous of receiving your account of the house, for your observations will have a motive which can leave nothing to conjecture and suffer nothing from want of memory. For one's own dear self, one ascertains and remembers everything.

Lady Sondes is an impudent woman to come back into her old neighborhood again; I suppose

she pretends never to have married before, and wonders how her father and mother came to have her christened Lady Sondes.

The store-closet, I hope, will never do so again, for much of the evil is proved to have proceeded from the gutter being choked up, and we have had it cleared. We had reason to rejoice in the child's absence at the time of the thaw, for the nursery was not habitable. We hear of similar disasters from almost everybody.

No news from Portsmouth. We are very patient. Mrs. Charles Fowle desires to be kindly remembered to you. She is warmly interested in my brother and his family.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXV.

Sloane St., Thursday (April 18, 1811).

My dear Cassandra, — I have so many little matters to tell you of, that I cannot wait any longer before I begin to put them down. I spent Tuesday in Bentinck Street. The Cookes called here and took me back, and it was quite a Cooke day, for the Miss Rolles paid a visit while I was there, and Sam Arnold dropped in to tea.

The badness of the weather disconcerted an excellent plan of mine, — that of calling on Miss Beckford again; but from the middle of the day it rained incessantly. Mary and I, after disposing of her father and mother, went to the Liverpool Museum and the British Gallery, and I had some amusement at each, though my preference for men and women always inclines me to attend more to the company than the sight.

Mrs. Cooke regrets very much that she did not see you when you called; it was owing to a blunder among the servants, for she did not know of our visit till we were gone. She seems tolerably well, but the nervous part of her complaint, I fear, increases, and makes her more and more unwilling to part with Mary.

I have proposed to the latter that she should go to Chawton with me, on the supposition of my travelling the Guildford road, and she, I do believe, would be glad to do it, but perhaps it may be impossible; unless a brother can be at home at that time, it certainly must. George comes to them to-day.

I did not see Theo. till late on Tuesday; he was gone to Ilford, but he came back in time to show his usual nothing-meaning, harmless, heartless civility. Henry, who had been confined the whole day to the bank, took me in his way home, and, after putting life and wit into the party for a quar-

ter of an hour, put himself and his sister into a hackney coach.

I bless my stars that I have done with Tuesday. But, alas! Wednesday was likewise a day of great doings, for Manon and I took our walk to Grafton House, and I have a good deal to say on that subject.

I am sorry to tell you that I am getting very extravagant, and spending all my money, and, what is worse for you, I have been spending yours too; for in a linendraper's shop to which I went for checked muslin, and for which I was obliged to give seven shillings a yard, I was tempted by a pretty-colored muslin, and bought ten yards of it on the chance of your liking it; but at the same time, if it should not suit you, you must not think yourself at all obliged to take it; it is only 3*s.* 6*d.* per yard, and I should not in the least mind keeping the whole. In texture it is just what we prefer, but its resemblance to green crewels, I must own, is not great, for the pattern is a small red spot. And now I believe I have done all my commissions except Wedgwood.

I liked my walk very much; it was shorter than I had expected, and the weather was delightful. We set off immediately after breakfast, and must have reached Grafton House by half-past eleven; but when we entered the shop the whole counter was thronged, and we waited full half an hour be-

fore we could be attended to. When we were served, however, I was very well satisfied with my purchases, — my bugle trimming at 2*s.* 4*d.* and three pair silk stockings for a little less than 12*s.* a pair.

In my way back who should I meet but Mr. Moore, just come from Beckenham. I believe he would have passed me if I had not made him stop, but we were delighted to meet. I soon found, however, that he had nothing new to tell me, and then I let him go.

Miss Burton has made me a very pretty little bonnet, and now nothing can satisfy me but I must have a straw hat, of the riding-hat shape, like Mrs. Tilson's; and a young woman in this neighborhood is actually making me one. I am really very shocking, but it will not be dear at a guinea. Our pelisses are 17*s.* each; she charges only 8*s.* for the making, but the buttons seem expensive, — are expensive, I might have said, for the fact is plain enough.

We drank tea again yesterday with the Tilsons, and met the Smiths. I find all these little parties very pleasant. I like Mrs. S.; Miss Beaty is good-humor itself, and does not seem much besides. We spend to-morrow evening with them, and are to meet the Coln. and Mrs. Cantelo Smith you have been used to hear of, and, if she is in good humor, are likely to have excellent singing.

To-night I might have been at the play; Henry had kindly planned our going together to the Lyceum, but I have a cold which I should not like to make worse before Saturday, so I stay within all this day.

Eliza is walking out by herself. She has plenty of business on her hands just now, for the day of the party is settled, and drawing near. Above eighty people are invited for next Tuesday evening, and there is to be some very good music, — five professionals, three of them glee singers, besides amateurs. Fanny will listen to this. One of the hirelings is a Capital on the harp, from which I expect great pleasure. The foundation of the party was a dinner to Henry Egerton and Henry Walter, but the latter leaves town the day before. I am sorry, as I wished her prejudice to be done away, but should have been more sorry if there had been no invitation.

I am a wretch, to be so occupied with all these things as to seem to have no thoughts to give to people and circumstances which really supply a far more lasting interest, — the society in which you are; but I do think of you all, I assure you, and want to know all about everybody, and especially about your visit to the W. Friars; *mais le moyen* not to be occupied by one's own concerns?

Saturday. — Frank is superseded in the "Caledonia." Henry brought us this news yesterday

from Mr. Daysh, and he heard at the same time that Charles may be in England in the course of a month. Sir Edward Pollen succeeds Lord Gambier in his command, and some captain of his succeeds Frank; and I believe the order is already gone out. Henry means to inquire further to-day. He wrote to Mary on the occasion. This is something to think of. Henry is convinced that he will have the offer of something else, but does not think it will be at all incumbent on him to accept it; and then follows, what will he do? and where will he live?

I hope to hear from you to-day. How are you as to health, strength, looks, etc.? I had a very comfortable account from Chawton yesterday.

If the weather permits, Eliza and I walk into London this morning. She is in want of chimney lights for Tuesday, and I of an ounce of darning-cotton. She has resolved not to venture to the play to-night. The D'Entraigues and Comte Julien cannot come to the party, which was at first a grief, but she has since supplied herself so well with performers that it is of no consequence; their not coming has produced our going to them to-morrow evening, which I like the idea of. It will be amusing to see the ways of a French circle.

I wrote to Mrs. Hill a few days ago, and have received a most kind and satisfactory answer. Any time the first week in May exactly suits her, and

therefore I consider my going as tolerably fixed. I shall leave Sloane Street on the 1st or 2d, and be ready for James on the 9th, and, if his plan alters, I can take care of myself. I have explained my views here, and everything is smooth and pleasant; and Eliza talks kindly of conveying me to Streatham.

We met the Tilsons yesterday evening, but the singing Smiths sent an excuse, which put our Mrs. Smith out of humor.

We are come back, after a good dose of walking and coaching, and I have the pleasure of your letter. I wish I had James's verses, but they were left at Chawton. When I return thither, if Mrs. K. will give me leave, I will send them to her.

Our first object to-day was Henrietta St., to consult with Henry in consequence of a very unlucky change of the play for this very night, — "Hamlet" instead of "King John," — and we are to go on Monday to "Macbeth" instead; but it is a disappointment to us both.

Love to all.

Yours affectionately,

JANE.

Miss AUSTEN, EDWARD AUSTEN'S, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXVI.

Sloane St., Thursday (April 25).

My dearest Cassandra, — I can return the compliment by thanking you for the unexpected pleasure of your letter yesterday, and as I like unexpected pleasure, it made me very happy; and, indeed, you need not apologize for your letter in any respect, for it is all very fine, but not too fine, I hope, to be written again, or something like it.

I think Edward will not suffer much longer from heat; by the look of things this morning I suspect the weather is rising into the balsamic north-east. It has been hot here, as you may suppose, since it was so hot with you, but I have not suffered from it at all, nor felt it in such a degree as to make me imagine it would be anything in the country. Everybody has talked of the heat, but I set it all down to London.

I give you joy of our new nephew, and hope if he ever comes to be hanged it will not be till we are too old to care about it. It is a great comfort to have it so safely and speedily over. The Miss Curlings must be hard worked in writing so many letters, but the novelty of it may recommend it to them; mine was from Miss Eliza, and she says that my brother may arrive to-day.

No, indeed, I am never too busy to think of S. and S.[1] I can no more forget it than a mother can forget her sucking child; and I am much obliged to you for your inquiries. I have had two sheets to correct, but the last only brings us to Willoughby's first appearance. Mrs. K. regrets in the most flattering manner that she must wait till May, but I have scarcely a hope of its being out in June. Henry does not neglect it; he has hurried the printer, and says he will see him again to-day. It will not stand still during his absence, it will be sent to Eliza.

The Incomes remain as they were, but I will get them altered if I can. I am very much gratified by Mrs. K.'s interest in it; and whatever may be the event of it as to my credit with her, sincerely wish her curiosity could be satisfied sooner than is now probable. I think she will like my Elinor, but cannot build on anything else.

Our party went off extremely well. There were many solicitudes, alarms, and vexations beforehand, of course, but at last everything was quite right. The rooms were dressed up with flowers, etc., and looked very pretty. A glass for the mantelpiece was lent by the man who is making their own. Mr. Egerton and Mr. Walter came at half-past five, and the festivities began with a pair of very fine soles.

[1] "Sense and Sensibility."

Yes, Mr. Walter — for he postponed his leaving London on purpose — which did not give much pleasure at the time, any more than the circumstance from which it rose, — his calling on Sunday and being asked by Henry to take the family dinner on that day, which he did; but it is all smoothed over now, and she likes him very well.

At half-past seven arrived the musicians in two hackney coaches, and by eight the lordly company began to appear. Among the earliest were George and Mary Cooke, and I spent the greatest part of the evening very pleasantly with them. The drawing-room being soon hotter than we liked, we placed ourselves in the connecting passage, which was comparatively cool, and gave us all the advantage of the music at a pleasant distance, as well as that of the first view of every new-comer.

I was quite surrounded by acquaintance, especially gentlemen; and what with Mr. Hampson, Mr. Seymour, Mr. W. Knatchbull, Mr. Guillemarde, Mr. Cure, a Captain Simpson, brother to *the* Captain Simpson, besides Mr. Walter and Mr. Egerton, in addition to the Cookes, and Miss Beckford, and Miss Middleton, I had quite as much upon my hands as I could do.

Poor Miss B. has been suffering again from her old complaint, and looks thinner than ever. She certainly goes to Cheltenham the beginning of June. We were all delight and cordiality, of

course. Miss M. seems very happy, but has not beauty enough to figure in London.

Including everybody we were sixty-six, — which was considerably more than Eliza had expected, and quite enough to fill the back drawing-room and leave a few to be scattered about in the other and in the passage.

The music was extremely good. It opened (tell Fanny) with "Poike de Parp pirs praise pof Prapela;" and of the other glees I remember, "In peace love tunes," "Rosabelle," "The Red Cross Knight," and "Poor Insect." Between the songs were lessons on the harp, or harp and pianoforte together; and the harp-player was Wiepart, whose name seems famous, though new to me. There was one female singer, a short Miss Davis, all in blue, bringing up for the public line, whose voice was said to be very fine indeed; and all the performers gave great satisfaction by doing what they were paid for, and giving themselves no airs. No amateur could be persuaded to do anything.

The house was not clear till after twelve. If you wish to hear more of it, you must put your questions, but I seem rather to have exhausted than spared the subject.

This said Captain Simpson told us, on the authority of some other Captain just arrived from Halifax, that Charles was bringing the "Cleopatra" home, and that she was probably by this

time in the Channel; but as Captain S. was certainly in liquor, we must not quite depend on it. It must give one a sort of expectation, however, and will prevent my writing to him any more. I would rather he should not reach England till I am at home, and the Steventon party gone.

My mother and Martha both write with great satisfaction of Anna's behavior. She is quite an Anna with variations, but she cannot have reached her last, for that is always the most flourishing and showy; she is at about her third or fourth, which are generally simple and pretty.

Your lilacs are in leaf, ours are in bloom. The horse-chestnuts are quite out, and the elms almost. I had a pleasant walk in Kensington Gardens on Sunday with Henry, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Tilson; everything was fresh and beautiful.

We did go to the play, after all, on Saturday. We went to the Lyceum, and saw the "Hypocrite," an old play taken from Molière's "Tartuffe," and were well entertained. Dowton and Mathews were the good actors; Mrs. Edwin was the heroine, and her performance is just what it used to be. I have no chance of seeing Mrs. Siddons; she did act on Monday, but as Henry was told by the box-keeper that he did not not think she would, the plans, and all thought of it, were given up. I should particularly have liked seeing her in "Constance,"

and could swear at her with little effort for disappointing me.

Henry has been to the Water-Color Exhibition, which opened on Monday, and is to meet us there again some morning. If Eliza cannot go (and she has a cold at present), Miss Beaty will be invited to be my companion. Henry leaves town on Sunday afternoon, but he means to write soon himself to Edward, and will tell his own plans.

The tea is this moment setting out.

Do not have your colored muslin unless you really want it, because I am afraid I could not send it to the coach without giving trouble here.

Eliza caught her cold on Sunday in our way to the D'Entraigues. The horses actually gibbed on this side of Hyde Park Gate: a load of fresh gravel made it a formidable hill to them, and they refused the collar; I believe there was a sore shoulder to irritate. Eliza was frightened, and we got out, and were detained in the evening air several minutes. The cold is in her chest, but she takes care of herself, and I hope it may not last long.

This engagement prevented Mr. Walter's staying late, — he had his coffee and went away. Eliza enjoyed her evening very much, and means to cultivate the acquaintance; and I see nothing to dislike in them but their taking quantities of snuff. Monsieur, the old Count, is a very fine-looking man, with quiet manners, good enough for an Eng

lishman, and, I believe, is a man of great information and taste. He has some fine paintings, which delighted Henry as much as the son's music gratified Eliza; and among them a miniature of Philip V. of Spain, Louis XIV.'s grandson, which exactly suited my capacity. Count Julien's performance is very wonderful.

We met only Mrs. Latouche and Miss East, and we are just now engaged to spend next Sunday evening at Mrs. L.'s, and to meet the D'Entraigues, but M. le Comte must do without Henry. If he would but speak English, I would take to him.

Have you ever mentioned the leaving off tea to Mrs. K.? Eliza has just spoken of it again. The benefit she has found from it in sleeping has been very great.

I shall write soon to Catherine to fix my day, which will be Thursday. We have no engagement but for Sunday. Eliza's cold makes quiet advisable. Her party is mentioned in this morning's paper. I am sorry to hear of poor Fanny's state. From that quarter, I suppose, is to be the alloy of her happiness. I will have no more to say.

Yours affectionately,

J. A.

Give my love particularly to my goddaughter.

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

XXXVII.

Sloane St., Tuesday.

My dear Cassandra, — I had sent off my letter yesterday before yours came, which I was sorry for; but as Eliza has been so good as to get me a frank, your questions shall be answered without much further expense to you.

The best direction to Henry at Oxford will be "The Blue Boar, Cornmarket."

I do not mean to provide another trimming for my pelisse, for I am determined to spend no more money; so I shall wear it as it is, longer than I ought, and then — I do not know.

My head-dress was a bugle-band like the border to my gown, and a flower of Mrs. Tilson's. I depended upon hearing something of the evening from Mr. W. K., and am very well satisfied with his notice of me — "A pleasing-looking young woman" — that must do; one cannot pretend to anything better now; thankful to have it continued a few years longer!

It gives me sincere pleasure to hear of Mrs. Knight's having had a tolerable night at last, but upon this occasion I wish she had another name, for the two *nights* jingle very much.

We have tried to get "Self-control," but in vain. I should like to know what her estimate is, but am always half afraid of finding a clever novel too

clever, and of finding my own story and my own people all forestalled.

Eliza has just received a few lines from Henry to assure her of the good conduct of his mare. He slept at Uxbridge on Sunday, and wrote from Wheatfield.

We were not claimed by Hans Place yesterday, but are to dine there to-day. Mr. Tilson called in the evening, but otherwise we were quite alone all day; and after having been out a good deal, the change was very pleasant.

I like your opinion of Miss Atten much better than I expected, and have now hopes of her staying a whole twelvemonth. By this time I suppose she is hard at it, governing away. Poor creature! I pity her, though they are my nieces.

Oh! yes, I remember Miss Emma Plumbtree's local consequence perfectly.

> I am in a dilemma, for want of an Emma,
> Escaped from the lips of Henry Gipps.

But, really, I was never much more put to it than in continuing an answer to Fanny's former message. What is there to be said on the subject? Pery pell, or pare pey? or po; or at the most, Pi, pope, pey, pike, pit.

I congratulate Edward on the Weald of Kent Canal Bill being put off till another Session, as I have just had the pleasure of reading. There is always something to be hoped from delay.

Between Session and Session
The first Prepossession
May rouse up the Nation,
And the villanous Bill
May be forced to lie still
Against wicked men's will.

There is poetry for Edward and his daughter. I am afraid I shall not have any for you.

I forgot to tell you in my last that our cousin Miss Payne called in on Saturday, and was persuaded to stay dinner. She told us a great deal about her friend Lady Cath. Brecknell, who is most happily married, and Mr. Brecknell is very religious, and has got black whiskers.

I am glad to think that Edward has a tolerable day for his drive to Goodnestone, and very glad to hear of his kind promise of bringing you to town. I hope everything will arrange itself favorably. The 16th is now to be Mrs. Dundas's day.

I mean, if I can, to wait for your return before I have my new gown made up, from a notion of their making up to more advantage together; and as I find the muslin is not so wide as it used to be, some contrivance may be necessary. I expect the skirt to require one-half breadth cut in gores, besides two whole breadths.

Eliza has not yet quite resolved on inviting Anna, but I think she will.

Yours very affectionately,

JANE.

XXXVIII.

Chawton, Wednesday (May 29).

It was a mistake of mine, my dear Cassandra, to talk of a tenth child at Hamstall. I had forgot there were but eight already.

Your inquiry after my uncle and aunt were most happily timed, for the very same post brought an account of them. They are again at Gloucester House enjoying fresh air, which they seem to have felt the want of in Bath, and are tolerably well, but not more than tolerable. My aunt does not enter into particulars, but she does not write in spirits, and we imagine that she has never entirely got the better of her disorder in the winter. Mrs. Welby takes her out airing in her barouche, which gives her a headache, — a comfortable proof, I suppose, of the uselessness of the new carriage when they have got it.

You certainly must have heard before I can tell you that Col. Orde has married our cousin Margt. Beckford, the Marchess. of Douglas's sister. The papers say that her father disinherits her, but I think too well of an Orde to suppose that she has not a handsome independence of her own.

The chickens are all alive and fit for the table, but we save them for something grand. Some of the flower seeds are coming up very well, but your mignonette makes a wretched appearance. Miss

CHAWTON COTTAGE, FROM THE GARDEN.

Benn has been equally unlucky as to hers. She had seed from four different people, and none of it comes up. Our young piony at the foot of the fir-tree has just blown and looks very handsome, and the whole of the shrubbery border will soon be very gay with pinks and sweet-williams, in addition to the columbines already in bloom. The syringas, too, are coming out. We are likely to have a great crop of Orleans plums, but not many greengages — on the standard scarcely any, three or four dozen, perhaps, against the wall. I believe I told you differently when I first came home, but I can now judge better than I could then.

I have had a medley and satisfactory letter this morning from the husband and wife at Cowes; and in consequence of what is related of their plans, we have been talking over the possibility of inviting them here in their way from Steventon, which is what one should wish to do, and is, I dare say, what they expect, but, supposing Martha to be at home, it does not seem a very easy thing to accommodate so large a party. My mother offers to give up her room to Frank and Mary, but there will then be only the best for two maids and three children.

They go to Steventon about the 22d, and I guess — for it is quite a guess — will stay there from a fortnight to three weeks.

I must not venture to press Miss Sharpe's com-

ing at present; we may hardly be at liberty before August.

Poor John Bridges! we are very sorry for his situation and for the distress of the family. Lady B., is in one way severely tried. And our own dear brother suffers a great deal, I dare say, on the occasion.

I have not much to say of ourselves. Anna is nursing a cold caught in the arbor at Faringdon, that she may be able to keep her engagement to Maria M. this evening, when I suppose she will make it worse.

She did not return from Faringdon till Sunday, when H. B. walked home with her, and drank tea here. She was with the Prowtings almost all Monday. She went to learn to make feather trimmings of Miss Anna, and they kept her to dinner, which was rather lucky, as we were called upon to meet Mrs. and Miss Terry the same evening at the Digweeds; and though Anna was of course invited too, I think it always safest to keep her away from the family, lest she should be doing too little or too much.

Mrs. Terry, Mary, and Robert, with my aunt Harding and her daughter, came from Dummer for a day and a night, — all very agreeable and very much delighted with the new house and with Chawton in general.

We sat upstairs, and had thunder and lightning

as usual. I never knew such a spring for thunder-storms as it has been. Thank God! we have had no bad ones here. I thought myself in luck to have my uncomfortable feelings shared by the mistress of the house, as that procured blinds and candles. It had been excessively hot the whole day. Mrs. Harding is a good-looking woman, but not much like Mrs. Toke, inasmuch as she is very brown and has scarcely any teeth; she seems to have some of Mrs. Toke's civility. Miss H. is an elegant, pleasing, pretty-looking girl, about nineteen, I suppose, or nineteen and a half, or nineteen and a quarter, with flowers in her head and music at her finger-ends. She plays very well indeed. I have seldom heard anybody with more pleasure. They were at Godington four or five years ago. My cousin Flora Long was there last year.

My name is Diana. How does Fanny like it? What a change in the weather! We have a fire again now.

Harriet Benn sleeps at the Great House to-night, and spends to-morrow with us; and the plan is that we should all walk with her to drink tea at Faringdon, for her mother is now recovered; but the state of the weather is not very promising at present.

Miss Benn has been returned to her cottage since the beginning of last week, and has now just got another girl; she comes from Alton. For many

days Miss B. had nobody with her but her niece Elizabeth, who was delighted to be her visitor and her maid. They both dined here on Saturday while Anna was at Faringdon; and last night an accidental meeting and a sudden impulse produced Miss Benn and Maria Middleton at our tea-table.

If you have not heard it is very fit you should, that Mr. Harrison has had the living of Fareham given him by the Bishop, and is going to reside there; and now it is said that Mr. Peach (beautiful wiseacre) wants to have the curacy of Overton, and if he does leave Wootton, James Digweed wishes to go there. Fare you well.

Yours affectionately, JANE AUSTEN.

The chimneys at the Great House are done. Mr. Prowting has opened a gravel-pit, very conveniently for my mother, just at the mouth of the approach to his house; but it looks a little as if he meant to catch all his company. Tolerable gravel.

Miss AUSTEN,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

XXXIX.

CHAWTON, Thursday (June 6).

BY this time, my dearest Cassandra, you know Martha's plans. I was rather disappointed, I confess, to find that she could not leave town till

after ye 24th, as I had hoped to see you here the week before. The delay, however, is not great, and everything seems generally arranging itself for your return very comfortably.

I found Henry perfectly predisposed to bring you to London if agreeable to yourself; he has not fixed his day for going into Kent, but he must be back again before ye 20th. You may therefore think with something like certainty of the close of your Godmersham visit, and will have, I suppose, about a week for Sloane Street. He travels in his gig, and should the weather be tolerable I think you must have a delightful journey.

I have given up all idea of Miss Sharpe's travelling with you and Martha, for though you are both all compliance with my scheme, yet as you knock off a week from the end of her visit, and Martha rather more from the beginning, the thing is out of the question.

I have written to her to say that after the middle of July we shall be happy to receive her, and I have added a welcome if she could make her way hither directly, but I do not expect that she will. I have also sent our invitation to Cowes.

We are very sorry for the disappointment you have all had in Lady B.'s illness; but a division of the proposed party is with you by this time, and I hope may have brought you a better account of the rest.

Give my love and thanks to Harriot, who has written me charming things of your looks, and diverted me very much by poor Mrs. C. Milles's continued perplexity.

I had a few lines from Henry on Tuesday to prepare us for himself and his friend, and by the time that I had made the sumptuous provision of a neck of mutton on the occasion, they drove into the court; but lest you should not immediately recollect in how many hours a neck of mutton may be certainly procured, I add that they came a little after twelve, — both tall and well, and in their different degrees agreeable.

It was a visit of only twenty-four hours, but very pleasant while it lasted. Mr. Tilson took a sketch of the Great House before dinner, and after dinner we all three walked to Chawton Park,[1] meaning to go into it, but it was too dirty, and we were obliged to keep on the outside. Mr. Tilson admired the trees very much, but grieved that they should not be turned into money.

My mother's cold is better, and I believe she only wants dry weather to be very well. It was a great distress to her that Anna should be absent during her uncle's visit, a distress which I could not share. She does not return from Faringdon till this evening, and I doubt not has had plenty

[1] A large beech wood extending for a long distance upon a hill about a mile from Chawton: the trees are magnificent.

of the miscellaneous, unsettled sort of happiness which seems to suit her best. We hear from Miss Benn, who was on the Common with the Prowtings, that she was very much admired by the gentlemen in general.

I like your new bonnets exceedingly; yours is a shape which always looks well, and I think Fanny's particularly becoming to her.

On Monday I had the pleasure of receiving, unpacking, and approving our Wedgwood ware. It all came very safely, and upon the whole is a good match, though I think they might have allowed us rather larger leaves, especially in such a year of fine foliage as this. One is apt to suppose that the woods about Birmingham must be blighted. There was no bill with the goods, but that shall not screen them from being paid. I mean to ask Martha to settle the account. It will be quite in her way, for she is just now sending my mother a breakfast-set from the same place.

I hope it will come by the wagon to-morrow; it is certainly what we want, and I long to know what it is like, and as I am sure Martha has great pleasure in making the present, I will not have any regret. We have considerable dealings with the wagons at present: a hamper of port and brandy from Southampton is now in the kitchen.

Your answer about the Miss Plumbtrees proves you as fine a Daniel as ever Portia was; for I maintained Emma to be the eldest.

We began pease on Sunday, but our gatherings are very small, not at all like the gathering in the "Lady of the Lake." Yesterday I had the agreeable surprise of finding several scarlet strawberries quite ripe; had you been at home, this would have been a pleasure lost. There are more gooseberries and fewer currants than I thought at first. We must buy currants for our wine.

The Digweeds are gone down to see the Stephen Terrys at Southampton, and catch the King's birthday at Portsmouth. Miss Papillon called on us yesterday, looking handsomer than ever. Maria Middleton and Miss Benn dine here to-morrow.

We are not to enclose any more letters to Abingdon Street, as perhaps Martha has told you.

I had just left off writing and put on my things for walking to Alton, when Anna and her friend Harriot called in their way thither; so we went together. Their business was to provide mourning against the King's death, and my mother has had a bombazine bought for her. I am not sorry to be back again, for the young ladies had a great deal to do, and without much method in doing it.

Anna does not come home till to-morrow morning. She has written I find to Fanny, but there does not seem to be a great deal to relate of Tuesday. I had hoped there might be dancing.

Mrs. Budd died on Sunday evening. I saw

her two days before her death, and thought it must happen soon. She suffered much from weakness and restlessness almost to the last. Poor little Harriot seems truly grieved. You have never mentioned Harry; how is he?

With love to you all,

Yours affectionately, **J. A.**

Miss Austen, Edward Austen's, Esq.,
Godmersham Park, Faversham.

XL.

Chawton, Friday (January 29, 1813).

I hope you received my little parcel by J. Bond on Wednesday evening, my dear Cassandra, and that you will be ready to hear from me again on Sunday, for I feel that I must write to you to-day. I want to tell you that I have got my own darling child[1] from London. On Wednesday I received one copy sent down by Falkener, with three lines from Henry to say that he had given another to Charles and sent a third by the coach to Godmersham. . . . The advertisement is in our paper to-day for the first time: 18*s.* He shall ask 1*l.* 1*s.* for my two next, and 1*l.* 8*s.* for my stupidest of all. Miss B. dined with us on the very day of the book's coming, and in the evening we fairly set at it, and read half the first vol. to her, prefacing that, having intelligence from

[1] "Pride and Prejudice."

Henry that such a work would soon appear, we had desired him to send it whenever it came out, and I believe it passed with her unsuspected. She was amused, poor soul! *That* she could not help, you know, with two such people to lead the way; but she really does seem to admire Elizabeth. I must confess that I think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least, I do not know. There are a few typical errors; and a "said he," or a "said she," would sometimes make the dialogue more immediately clear; but "I do not write for such dull elves" as have not a great deal of ingenuity themselves. The second volume is shorter than I could wish, but the difference is not so much in reality as in look, there being a larger proportion of narrative in that part. I have lop't and crop't so successfully, however, that I imagine it must be rather shorter than "Sense and Sensibility" altogether. Now I will try and write of something else.

XLI.

Chawton, Thursday (February 4).

My dear Cassandra, — Your letter was truly welcome, and I am much obliged to you for all your praise; it came at a right time, for I had had some fits of disgust. Our second evening's read-

ing to Miss B. had not pleased me so well, but I believe something must be attributed to my mother's too rapid way of getting on: though she perfectly understands the characters herself, she cannot speak as they ought. Upon the whole, however, I am quite vain enough and well satisfied enough. The work is rather too light and bright and sparkling: it wants shade; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story, — an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparte, or something that would form a contrast, and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style. . . . The greatest blunder in the printing that I have met with is in page 220, v. 3, where two speeches are made into one. There might as well be no suppers at Longbourn; but I suppose it was the remains of Mrs. Bennet's old Meryton habits.

XLII.

FEBRUARY.

THIS will be a quick return for yours, my dear Cassandra. I doubt its having much else to recommend it; but there is no saying: it may turn out to be a very long and delightful letter. I am exceedingly pleased that you can say what you do, after

having gone through the whole work, and Fanny's praise is very gratifying. My hopes were tolerably strong of her, but nothing like a certainty. Her liking Darcy and Elizabeth is enough. She might hate all the others, if she would. I have her opinion under her own hand this morning; but your transcript of it, which I read first, was not, and is not, the less acceptable. To me it is of course all praise, but the more exact truth which she sends you is good enough. . . . Our party on Wednesday was not unagreeable, though we wanted a master of the house less anxious and fidgety, and more conversable. Upon Mrs. ——'s mentioning that she had sent the rejected addresses to Mrs. H., I began talking to her a little about them, and expressed my hope of their having amused her. Her answer was, "Oh dear, yes, very much, very droll indeed, the opening of the house, and the striking up of the fiddles!" What she meant, poor woman, who shall say? I sought no farther. As soon as a whist-party was formed, and a round table threatened, I made my mother an excuse and came away, leaving just as many for their round table as there were at Mrs. Grant's.[1] I wish they might be as agreeable a set. My mother is very well, and finds great amusement in glove-knitting, and at present wants

[1] At this time, February, 1813, "Mansfield Park" was nearly finished.

no other work. We quite run over with books. She has got Sir John Carr's "Travels in Spain," and I am reading a Society octavo, an "Essay on the Military Police and Institutions of the British Empire," by Capt. Pasley of the Engineers, — a book which I protested against at first, but which upon trial I find delightfully written and highly entertaining. I am as much in love with the author as I ever was with Clarkson or Buchanan, or even the two Mr. Smiths of the city. The first soldier I ever sighed for; but he does write with extraordinary force and spirit. Yesterday, moreover, brought us "Mrs. Grant's Letters," with Mr. White's compliments; but I have disposed of them, compliments and all, to Miss P., and amongst so many readers or retainers of books as we have in Chawton, I dare say there will be no difficulty in getting rid of them for another fortnight, if necessary. I have disposed of Mrs. Grant for the second fortnight to Mrs. ——. It can make no difference to her which of the twenty-six fortnights in the year the three vols. lie on her table. I have been applied to for information as to the oath taken in former times of Bell, Book, and Candle, but have none to give. Perhaps you may be able to learn something of its origin where you now are. Ladies who read those enormous great stupid thick quarto volumes which one always sees in the breakfast-parlor there must be

acquainted with everything in the world. I detest a quarto. Captain Pasley's book is too good for their society. They will not understand a man who condenses his thoughts into an octavo. I have learned from Sir J. Carr that there is no Government House at Gibraltar. I must alter it to the Commissioner's.

XLIII.

Sloane Street, Thursday, May 20.

My dear Cassandra, — Before I say anything else, I claim a paper full of halfpence on the drawing-room mantelpiece; I put them there myself, and forgot to bring them with me. I cannot say that I have yet been in any distress for money, but I choose to have my due, as well as the Devil. How lucky we were in our weather yesterday! This wet morning makes one more sensible of it. We had no rain of any consequence. The head of the curricle was put half up three or four times, but our share of the showers was very trifling, though they seemed to be heavy all round us, when we were on the Hog's-back, and I fancied it might then be raining so hard at Chawton as to make you feel for us much more than we deserved. Three hours and a quarter took us to Guildford, where we stayed barely two hours, and had only just time enough for all we

had to do there; that is, eating a long and comfortable breakfast, watching the carriages, paying Mr. Harrington, and taking a little stroll afterwards. From some views which that stroll gave us, I think most highly of the situation of Guildford. We wanted all our brothers and sisters to be standing with us in the bowling-green, and looking towards Horsham. I was very lucky in my gloves, — got them at the first shop I went to, though I went into it rather because it was near than because it looked at all like a glove-shop, and gave only four shillings for them; after which everybody at Chawton will be hoping and predicting that they cannot be good for anything, and their worth certainly remains to be proved; but I think they look very well. We left Guildford at twenty minutes before twelve (I hope somebody cares for these minutiæ), and were at Esher in about two hours more. I was very much pleased with the country in general. Between Guildford and Ripley I thought it particularly pretty, also about Painshill; and from a Mr. Spicer's grounds at Esher, which we walked into before dinner, the views were beautiful. I cannot say what we did *not* see, but I should think there could not be a wood, or a meadow, or palace, or remarkable spot in England that was not spread out before us on one side or other. Claremont is going to be sold: a Mr. Ellis has it now. It

is a house that seems never to have prospered. After dinner we walked forward to be overtaken at the coachman's time, and before he did overtake us we were very near Kingston. I fancy it was about half-past six when we reached this house, — a twelve hours' business, and the horses did not appear more than reasonably tired. I was very tired too, and glad to get to bed early, but am quite well to-day. I am very snug in the front drawing-room all to myself, and would not say "thank you" for any company but you. The quietness of it does me good. I have contrived to pay my two visits, though the weather made me a great while about it, and left me only a few minutes to sit with Charlotte Craven.[1] She looks very well, and her hair is done up with an elegance to do credit to any education. Her manners are as unaffected and pleasing as ever. She had heard from her mother to-day. Mrs. Craven spends another fortnight at Chilton. I saw nobody but Charlotte, which pleased me best. I was shown upstairs into a drawing-room, where she came to me; and the appearance of the room, so totally unschoollike, amused me very much: it was full of modern elegances.

Yours very affec^{tly},

J. A.

[1] The present Lady Pollen, of Redenham, near Andover, then at a school in London.

XLIV.

Sloane Street, Monday (May 24).

My dearest Cassandra, — I am very much obliged to you for writing to me. You must have hated it after a worrying morning. Your letter came just in time to save my going to Remnant's, and fit me for Christian's, where I bought Fanny's dimity.

I went the day before (Friday) to Layton's as I proposed, and got my mother's gown, — seven yards at 6*s.* 6*d.* I then walked into No. 10, which is all dirt and confusion, but in a very promising way; and after being present at the opening of a new account, to my great amusement, Henry and I went to the exhibition in Spring Gardens. It is not thought a good collection, but I was very well pleased, particularly (pray tell Fanny) with a small portrait of Mrs. Bingley,[1] excessively like her.

I went in hopes of seeing one of her sister, but there was no Mrs. Darcy.[1] Perhaps, however, I may find her in the great exhibition, which we shall go to if we have time. I have no chance of her in the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds's paintings, which is now showing in Pall Mall, and which we are also to visit.

[1] *Vide* "Pride and Prejudice."

Mrs. Bingley's is exactly herself, — size, shaped face, features, and sweetness; there never was a greater likeness. She is dressed in a white gown, with green ornaments, which convinces me of what I had always supposed, that green was a favorite color with her. I dare say Mrs. D. will be in yellow.

Friday was our worst day as to weather. We were out in a very long and very heavy storm of hail, and there had been others before, but I heard no thunder. Saturday was a good deal better; dry and cold.

I gave 2*s.* 6*d.* for the dimity. I do not boast of any bargains, but think both the sarsenet and dimity good of their sort.

I have bought your locket, but was obliged to give 18*s.* for it, which must be rather more than you intended. It is neat and plain, set in gold.

We were to have gone to the Somerset House Exhibition on Saturday, but when I reached Henrietta Street Mr. Hampson was wanted there, and Mr. Tilson and I were obliged to drive about town after him, and by the time we had done it was too late for anything but home. We never found him after all.

I have been interrupted by Mrs. Tilson. Poor woman! She is in danger of not being able to attend Lady Drummond Smith's party to-night. Miss Burdett was to have taken her, and now

Miss Burdett has a cough and will not go. My cousin Caroline is her sole dependence.

The events of yesterday were, our going to Belgrave Chapel in the morning, our being prevented by the rain from going to evening service at St. James, Mr. Hampson's calling, Messrs. Barlow and Phillips dining here, and Mr. and Mrs. Tilson's coming in the evening *à l'ordinaire*. She drank tea with us both Thursday and Saturday; he dined out each day, and on Friday we were with them, and they wish us to go to them to-morrow evening, to meet Miss Burdett, but I do not know how it will end. Henry talks of a drive to Hampstead, which may interfere with it.

I should like to see Miss Burdett very well, but that I am rather frightened by hearing that she wishes to be introduced to me. If I am a wild beast, I cannot help it. It is not my own fault.

There is no change in our plan of leaving London, but we shall not be with you before Tuesday. Henry thinks Monday would appear too early a day. There is no danger of our being induced to stay longer.

I have not quite determined how I shall manage about my clothes; perhaps there may be only my trunk to send by the coach, or there may be a band-box with it. I have taken your gentle hint, and written to Mrs. Hill.

The Hoblyns want us to dine with them, but we have refused. When Henry returns he will be dining out a great deal, I dare say; as he will then be alone, it will be more desirable; he will be more welcome at every table, and every invitation more welcome to him. He will not want either of us again till he is settled in Henrietta Street. This is my present persuasion. And he will not be settled there — really settled — till late in the autumn; "he will not be come to bide" till after September.

There is a gentleman in treaty for this house. Gentleman himself is in the country, but gentleman's friend came to see it the other day, and seemed pleased on the whole. Gentleman would rather prefer an increased rent to parting with five hundred guineas at once, and if that is the only difficulty it will not be minded. Henry is indifferent as to the which.

Get us the best weather you can for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. We are to go to Windsor in our way to Henley, which will be a great delight. We shall be leaving Sloane Street about twelve, two or three hours after Charles's party have begun their journey. You will miss them, but the comfort of getting back into your own room will be great. And then the tea and sugar!

I fear Miss Clewes is not better, or you would

have mentioned it. I shall not write again unless I have any unexpected communication or opportunity to tempt me. I enclose Mr. Herington's bill and receipt.

I am very much obliged to Fanny for her letter; it made me laugh heartily, but I cannot pretend to answer it. Even had I more time, I should not feel at all sure of the sort of letter that Miss D.[1] would write. I hope Miss Benn is got well again, and will have a comfortable dinner with you to-day.

Monday Evening. — We have been both to the exhibition and Sir J. Reynolds's, and I am disappointed, for there was nothing like Mrs. D. at either. I can only imagine that Mr. D. prizes any picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling, — that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy.

Setting aside this disappointment, I had great amusement among the pictures; and the driving about, the carriage being open, was very pleasant. I liked my solitary elegance very much, and was ready to laugh all the time at my being where I was. I could not but feel that I had naturally small right to be parading about London in a barouche.

Henry desires Edward may know that he has

[1] Miss Darcy.

just bought three dozen of claret for him (cheap), and ordered it to be sent down to Chawton.

I should not wonder if we got no farther than Reading on Thursday evening, and so reach Steventon only to a reasonable dinner-hour the next day; but whatever I may write or you may imagine, we know it will be something different. I shall be quiet to-morrow morning; all my business is done, and I shall only call again upon Mrs. Hoblyn, etc.

Love to your much . . . party.

Yours affectionately,

J. Austen.

XLV.

Henrietta St., Wednesday (Sept 15, ½ past 8).

Here I am, my dearest Cassandra, seated in the breakfast, dining, sitting room, beginning with all my might. Fanny will join me as soon as she is dressed, and begin her letter.

We had a very good journey, weather and roads excellent; the three first stages for 1*s.* 6*d.*, and our only misadventure the being delayed about a quarter of an hour at Kingston for horses, and being obliged to put up with a pair belonging to a hackney coach and their coachman, which left no room on the barouche box for Lizzy, who was to have gone her last stage there as she did the first;

consequently we were all four within, which was a little crowded.

We arrived at a quarter-past four, and were kindly welcomed by the coachman, and then by his master, and then by William, and then by Mrs. Pengird, who all met us before we reached the foot of the stairs. Mde. Bigion was below dressing us a most comfortable dinner of soup, fish, bouillée, partridges, and an apple tart, which we sat down to soon after five, after cleaning and dressing ourselves, and feeling that we were most commodiously disposed of. The little adjoining dressing-room to our apartment makes Fanny and myself very well off indeed, and as we have poor Eliza's[1] bed our space is ample every way.

Sace arrived safely about half-past six. At seven we set off in a coach for the Lyceum; were at home again in about four hours and a half; had soup and wine and water, and then went to our holes.

Edward finds his quarters very snug and quiet. I must get a softer pen. This is harder. I am in agonies. I have not yet seen Mr. Crabbe. Martha's letter is gone to the post.

I am going to write nothing but short sentences. There shall be two full stops in every line. Layton and Shear's is Bedford House. We mean to

[1] Eliza, Henry Austen's first wife, who had died in the earlier part of this year.

get there before breakfast if it 's possible; for we feel more and more how much we have to do and how little time. This house looks very nice. It seems like Sloane Street moved here. I believe Henry is just rid of Sloane Street. Fanny does not come, but I have Edward seated by me beginning a letter, which looks natural.

Henry has been suffering from the pain in the face which he has been subject to before. He caught cold at Matlock, and since his return has been paying a little for past pleasure. It is nearly removed now, but he looks thin in the face, either from the pain or the fatigues of his tour, which must have been great.

Lady Robert is delighted with P. and P.,[1] and really was so, as I understand, before she knew who wrote it, for of course she knows now. He told her with as much satisfaction as if it were my wish. He did not tell me this, but he told Fanny. And Mr. Hastings! I am quite delighted with what such a man writes about it. Henry sent him the books after his return from Daylesford, but you will hear the letter too.

Let me be rational, and return to my two full stops.

I talked to Henry at the play last night. We were in a private box, — Mr. Spencer's, — which made it much more pleasant. The box is di

[1] "Pride and Prejudice."

rectly on the stage. One is infinitely less fatigued than in the common way. But Henry's plans are not what one could wish. He does not mean to be at Chawton till the 29th. He must be in town again by Oct. 5. His plan is to get a couple of days of pheasant shooting and then return directly. His wish was to bring you back with him. I have told him your scruples. He wishes you to suit yourself as to time, and if you cannot come till later, will send for you at any time as far as Bagshot. He presumed you would not find difficulty in getting so far. I could not say you would. He proposed your going with him into Oxfordshire. It was his own thought at first. I could not but catch at it for you.

We have talked of it again this morning (for now we have breakfasted), and I am convinced that if you can make it suit in other respects you need not scruple on his account. If you cannot come back with him on the 3rd or 4th, therefore, I do hope you will contrive to go to Adlestrop. By not beginning your absence till about the middle of this month I think you may manage it very well. But you will think all this over. One could wish he had intended to come to you earlier, but it cannot be helped.

I said nothing to him of Mrs. H. and Miss B., that he might not suppose difficulties. Shall not you put them into our own room? This seems to

me the best plan, and the maid will be most conveniently near.

Oh, dear me! when I shall ever have done. We did go to Layton and Shear's before breakfast. Very pretty English poplins at 4*s.* 3*d.*; Irish, ditto at 6*s.*; more pretty, certainly, — beautiful.

Fanny and the two little girls are gone to take places for to-night at Covent Garden; "Clandestine Marriage" and "Midas." The latter will be a fine show for L. and M.[1] They revelled last night in "Don Juan," whom we left in hell at half-past eleven. We had scaramouch and a ghost, and were delighted. I speak of them; my delight was very tranquil, and the rest of us were sober-minded. "Don Juan" was the last of three musical things. "Five Hours at Brighton," in three acts, — of which one was over before we arrived, none the worse, — and the "Beehive," rather less flat and trumpery.

I have this moment received 5*l.* from kind, beautiful Edward. Fanny has a similar gift. I shall save what I can of it for your better leisure in this place. My letter was from Miss Sharpe, — nothing particular. A letter from Fanny Cage this morning.

Four o'clock. — We are just come back from doing Mrs. Tickars, Miss Hare, and Mr. Spence. Mr. Hall is here, and while Fanny is under his hands, I will try to write a little more.

[1] Lizzy and Marianne.

Miss Hare had some pretty caps, and is to make me one like one of them, only white satin instead of blue. It will be white satin and lace, and a little white flower perking out of the left ear, like Harriot Byron's feather. I have allowed her to go as far as 1*l.* 16*s.* My gown is to be trimmed everywhere with white ribbon plaited on somehow or other. She says it will look well. I am not sanguine. They trim with white very much.

I learnt from Mrs. Tickars's young lady, to my high amusement, that the stays now are not made to force the bosom up at all; that was a very unbecoming, unnatural fashion. I was really glad to hear that they are not to be so much off the shoulders as they were.

Going to Mr. Spence's was a sad business, and cost us many tears; unluckily we were obliged to go a second time before he could do more than just look. We went first at half-past twelve and afterwards at three; papa with us each time; and, alas! we are to go again to-morrow. Lizzy is not finished yet. There have been no teeth taken out, however, nor will be, I believe; but he finds hers in a very bad state, and seems to think particularly ill of their durableness. They have been all cleaned, hers filed, and are to be filed again. There is a very sad hole between two of her front teeth.

Thursday Morning, half-past Seven. — Up and

dressed and downstairs in order to finish my letter in time for the parcel. At eight I have an appointment with Madame B., who wants to show me something downstairs. At nine we are to set off for Grafton House, and get that over before breakfast. Edward is so kind as to walk there with us. We are to be at Mr. Spence's again at 11.5: from that time shall be driving about I suppose till four o'clock at least. We are, if possible, to call on Mrs. Tilson.

Mr. Hall was very punctual yesterday, and curled me out at a great rate. I thought it looked hideous, and longed for a snug cap instead, but my companions silenced me by their admiration. I had only a bit of velvet round my head. I did not catch cold, however. The weather is all in my favor. I have had no pain in my face since I left you.

We had very good places in the box next the stage-box, front and second row; the three old ones behind, of course. I was particularly disappointed at seeing nothing of Mr. Crabbe. I felt sure of him when I saw that the boxes were fitted up with crimson velvet. The new Mr. Terry was Lord Ogleby, and Henry thinks he may do; but there was no acting more than moderate, and I was as much amused by the remembrances connected with "Midas" as with any part of it. The girls were very much delighted, but still prefer "Don Juan;"

and I must say that I have seen nobody on the stage who has been a more interesting character than that compound of cruelty and lust.

It was not possible for me to get the worsteds yesterday. I heard Edward last night pressing Henry to come to you, and I think Henry engaged to go there after his November collection. Nothing has been done as to S. and S.[1] The books came to hand too late for him to have time for it before he went. Mr. Hastings never hinted at Eliza in the smallest degree. Henry knew nothing of Mr. Trimmer's death. I tell you these things that you may not have to ask them over again.

There is a new clerk sent down to Alton, a Mr. Edmund Williams, a young man whom Henry thinks most highly of, and he turns out to be a son of the luckless Williamses of Grosvenor Place.

I long to have you hear Mr. H.'s opinion of P. and P. His admiring my Elizabeth so much is particularly welcome to me.

Instead of saving my superfluous wealth for you to spend, I am going to treat myself with spending it myself. I hope, at least, that I shall find some poplin at Layton and Shear's that will tempt me to buy it. If I do, it shall be sent to Chawton, as half will be for you; for I depend upon your being so kind as to accept it, being the main point. It

[1] "Sense and Sensibility."

will be a great pleasure to me. Don't say a word. I only wish you could choose too. I shall send twenty yards.

Now for Bath. Poor F. Cage has suffered a good deal from her accident. The noise of the White Hart was terrible to her. They will keep her quiet, I dare say. She is not so much delighted with the place as the rest of the party; probably, as she says herself, from having been less well, but she thinks she should like it better in the season. The streets are very empty now, and the shops not so gay as she expected. They are at No. 1 Henrietta Street, the corner of Laura Place, and have no acquaintance at present but the Bramstons.

Lady Bridges drinks at the Cross Bath, her son at the Hot, and Louisa is going to bathe. Dr. Parry seems to be half starving Mr. Bridges, for he is restricted to much such a diet as James's, bread, water and meat, and is never to eat so much of that as he wishes, and he is to walk a great deal, — walk till he drops, I believe, — gout or no gout. It really is to that purpose. I have not exaggerated.

Charming weather for you and us, and the travellers, and everybody. You will take your walk this afternoon, and . . .

Henrietta Street, the autumn of 1813.
Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favor of Mr. Gray.

XLVI.

Henrietta Street,
Thursday (Sept. 16, after dinner).

Thank you, my dearest Cassandra, for the nice long letter I sent off this morning. I hope you have had it by this time, and that it has found you all well, and my mother no more in need of leeches. Whether this will be delivered to you by Henry on Saturday evening, or by the postman on Sunday morning, I know not, as he has lately recollected something of an engagement for Saturday, which perhaps may delay his visit. He seems determined to come to you soon, however.

I hope you will receive the gown to-morrow, and may be able with tolerable honesty to say that you like the color. It was bought at Grafton House, where, by going very early, we got immediate attendance and went on very comfortably. I only forgot the one particular thing which I had always resolved to buy there, — a white silk handkerchief, — and was therefore obliged to give six shillings for one at Crook and Besford's; which reminds me to say that the worsteds ought also to be at Chawton to-morrow, and that I shall be very happy to hear they are approved. I had not much time for deliberation.

We are now all four of us young ladies sitting round the circular table in the inner room writing

our letters, while the two brothers are having a comfortable coze in the room adjoining. It is to be a quiet evening, much to the satisfaction of four of the six. My eyes are quite tired of dust and lamps.

The letter you forwarded from Edward, junr., has been duly received. He has been shooting most prosperously at home, and dining at Chilham Castle and with Mr. Scudamore.

My cap is come home, and I like it very much. Fanny has one also; hers is white sarsenet and lace, of a different shape from mine, more fit for morning carriage wear, which is what it is intended for, and is in shape exceedingly like our own satin and lace of last winter; shaped round the face exactly like it, with pipes and more fulness, and a round crown inserted behind. My cap has a peak in front. Large full bows of very narrow ribbon (old twopenny) are the thing. One over the right temple, perhaps, and another at the left ear.

Henry is not quite well. His stomach is rather deranged. You must keep him in rhubarb, and give him plenty of port and water. He caught his cold farther back than I told you, — before he got to Matlock, somewhere in his journey from the North; but the ill effects of that I hope are nearly gone.

We returned from Grafton House only just in

time for breakfast, and had scarcely finished breakfast when the carriage came to the door. From eleven to half-past three we were hard at it; we did contrive to get to Hans Place for ten minutes. Mrs. T. was as affectionate and pleasing as ever.

After our return Mr. Tilson walked up from the Compting House and called upon us, and these have been all our visitings.

I have rejoiced more than once that I bought my writing-paper in the country; we have not had a quarter of an hour to spare.

I enclose the eighteen-pence due to my mother. The rose color was 6*s.* and the other 4*s.* per yard. There was but two yards and a quarter of the dark slate in the shop, but the man promised to match it and send it off correctly.

Fanny bought her Irish at Newton's in Leicester Square, and I took the opportunity of thinking about your Irish, and seeing one piece of the yard wide at 4*s.*, and it seemed to me very good; good enough for your purpose. It might at least be worth your while to go there, if you have no other engagements. Fanny is very much pleased with the stockings she has bought of Remmington, silk at 12*s.*, cotton at 4*s.* 3*d.* She thinks them great bargains, but I have not seen them yet, as my hair was dressing when the man and the stockings came.

The poor girls and their teeth! I have not

mentioned them yet, but we were a whole hour at Spence's, and Lizzy's were filed and lamented over again, and poor Marianne had two taken out after all, the two just beyond the eye teeth, to make room for those in front. When her doom was fixed, Fanny, Lizzy, and I walked into the next room, where we heard each of the two sharp and hasty screams.

The little girls' teeth I can suppose in a critical state, but I think he must be a lover of teeth and money and mischief, to parade about Fanny's. I would not have had him look at mine for a shilling a tooth and double it. It was a disagreeable hour.

We then went to Wedgwood's, where my brother and Fanny chose a dinner-set. I believe the pattern is a small lozenge in purple, between lines of narrow gold, and it is to have the crest.

We must have been three-quarters of an hour at Grafton House, Edward sitting by all the time with wonderful patience. There Fanny bought the net for Anna's gown, and a beautiful square veil for herself. The edging there is very cheap. I was tempted by some, and I bought some very nice plaiting lace at 3*s.* 4*d.*

Fanny desires me to tell Martha, with her kind love, that Birchall assured her there was no second set of Hook's Lessons for Beginners, and that, by my advice, she has therefore chosen her a set by

another composer. I thought she would rather have something than not. It costs six shillings.

With love to you all, including Triggs, I remain,

Yours very affectionately, J. AUSTEN.

Henrietta St., autumn of 1813.

Miss AUSTEN, Chawton.
By favor of

XLVII.

GODMERSHAM PARK, Thursday (Sept. 23).

MY DEAREST CASSANDRA, — Thank you five hundred and forty times for the exquisite piece of workmanship which was brought into the room this morning, while we were at breakfast, with some very inferior works of art in the same way, and which I read with high glee, much delighted with everything it told, whether good or bad. It is so rich in striking intelligence that I hardly know what to reply to first. I believe finery must have it.

I am extremely glad that you like the poplin. I thought it would have my mother's approbation, but was not so confident of yours. Remember that it is a present. Do not refuse me. I am very rich.

Mrs. Clement is very welcome to her little boy, and to my congratulations into the bargain, if ever you think of giving them. I hope she will do

well. Her sister in Lucina, Mrs. H. Gipps, does too well, we think. Mary P. wrote on Sunday that she had been three days on the sofa. Sackree does not approve it.

Well, there is some comfort in the Mrs. Hulbart's not coming to you, and I am happy to hear of the honey. I was thinking of it the other day. Let me know when you begin the new tea and the new white wine. My present elegances have not yet made me indifferent to such matters. I am still a cat if I see a mouse.

I am glad you like our caps, but Fanny is out of conceit with hers already; she finds that she has been buying a new cap without having a new pattern, which is true enough. She is rather out of luck to like neither her gown nor her cap, but I do not much mind it, because besides that I like them both myself, I consider it as a thing of course at her time of life, — one of the sweet taxes of youth to choose in a hurry and make bad bargains.

I wrote to Charles yesterday, and Fanny has had a letter from him to-day, principally to make inquiries about the time of their visit here, to which mine was an answer beforehand; so he will probably write again soon to fix his week. I am best pleased that Cassy does not go to you.

Now, what have we been doing since I wrote last? The Mr. K.'s[1] came a little before dinner

[1] Knatchbulls.

on Monday, and Edward went to the church with the two seniors, but there is no inscription yet drawn up. They are very good-natured, you know, and civil, and all that, but are not particularly superfine; however, they ate their dinner and drank their tea, and went away, leaving their lovely Wadham in our arms, and I wish you had seen Fanny and me running backwards and forwards with his breeches from the little chintz to the white room before we went to bed, in the greatest of frights lest he should come upon us before we had done it all. There had been a mistake in the housemaid's preparation, and they were gone to bed.

He seems a very harmless sort of young man, nothing to like or dislike in him, — goes out shooting or hunting with the two others all the morning, and plays at whist and makes queer faces in the evening. . . .

XLVIII.

Godmersham Park, Monday (Oct. 11).

[My dearest Aunt Cass., — I have just asked Aunt Jane to let me write a little in her letter, but she does not like it, so I won't. Good-by!]

You will have Edward's letter to-morrow. He tells me that he did not send you any news to interfere with mine, but I do not think there is much for anybody to send at present.

We had our dinner-party on Wednesday, with the addition of Mrs. and Miss Milles, who were under a promise of dining here in their return from Eastwell, whenever they paid their visit of duty there, and it happened to be paid on that day. Both mother and daughter are much as I have always found them. I like the mother — first, because she reminds me of Mrs. Birch; and, secondly, because she is cheerful and grateful for what she is at the age of ninety and upwards. The day was pleasant enough. I sat by Mr. Chisholme, and we talked away at a great rate about nothing worth hearing.

It was a mistake as to the day of the Sherers going being fixed; they are ready, but are waiting for Mr. Paget's answer.

I inquired of Mrs. Milles after Jemima Brydges, and was quite grieved to hear that she was obliged to leave Canterbury some months ago on account of her debts, and is nobody knows where. What an unprosperous family!

On Saturday, soon after breakfast, Mr. J. P. left us for Norton Court. I like him very much. He gives me the idea of a very amiable young man, only too diffident to be so agreeable as he might be. He was out the chief of each morning with the other two, shooting and getting wet through. To-morrow we are to know whether he and a hundred young ladies will come here for the ball. I do not much expect any.

The Deedes cannot meet us; they have engagements at home. I will finish the Deedes by saying that they are not likely to come here till quite late in my stay, — the very last week perhaps; and I do not expect to see the Moores at all. They are not solicited till after Edward's return from Hampshire.

Monday, November 15, is the day now fixed for our setting out.

Poor Basingstoke races! There seem to have been two particularly wretched days on purpose for them; and Weyhill week does not begin much happier.

We were quite surprised by a letter from Anna at Tollard Royal, last Saturday; but perfectly approve her going, and only regret they should all go so far to stay so few days.

We had thunder and lightning here on Thursday morning, between five and seven; no very bad thunder, but a great deal of lightning. It has given the commencement of a season of wind and rain, and perhaps for the next six weeks we shall not have two dry days together.

Lizzy is very much obliged to you for your letter and will answer it soon, but has so many things to do that it may be four or five days before she can. This is quite her own message, spoken in rather a desponding tone. Your letter gave pleasure to all of us; we had all the reading of it of

course, — I three times, as I undertook, to the great relief of Lizzy, to read it to Sackree, and afterwards to Louisa.

Sackree does not at all approve of Mary Doe and her nuts, — on the score of propriety rather than health. She saw some signs of going after her in George and Henry, and thinks if you could give the girl a check, by rather reproving her for taking anything seriously about nuts which they said to her, it might be of use. This, of course, is between our three discreet selves, a scene of triennial bliss.

Mrs. Breton called here on Saturday. I never saw her before. She is a large, ungenteel woman, with self-satisfied and would-be elegant manners.

We are certain of some visitors to-morrow. Edward Bridges comes for two nights in his way from Lenham to Ramsgate, and brings a friend — name unknown — but supposed to be a Mr. Harpur, a neighboring clergyman; and Mr. R. Mascall is to shoot with the young men, which it is to be supposed will end in his staying dinner.

On Thursday, Mr. Lushington, M.P. for Canterbury, and manager of the Lodge Hounds, dines here, and stays the night. He is chiefly young Edward's acquaintance. If I can I will get a frank from him, and write to you all the sooner. I suppose the Ashford ball will furnish something.

As I wrote of my nephews with a little bitter-

ness in my last, I think it particularly incumbent on me to do them justice now, and I have great pleasure in saying that they were both at the Sacrament yesterday. After having much praised or much blamed anybody, one is generally sensible of something just the reverse soon afterwards. Now these two boys who are out with the foxhounds will come home and disgust me again by some habit of luxury or some proof of sporting mania, unless I keep it off by this prediction. They amuse themselves very comfortably in the evening by netting; they are each about a rabbit net, and sit as deedily to it, side by side, as any two Uncle Franks could do.

I am looking over "Self-Control" again, and my opinion is confirmed of its being an excellently meant, elegantly written work, without anything of nature or probability in it. I declare I do not know whether Laura's passage down the American river is not the most natural, possible, every-day thing she ever does.

Tuesday. — Dear me! what is to become of me? Such a long letter! Two-and-forty lines in the second page. Like Harriot Byron, I ask, what am I to do with my gratitude? I can do nothing but thank you and go on. A few of your inquiries, I think, are replied to *en avance.*

The name of F. Cage's drawing-master is O'Neil. We are exceedingly amused with your Shalden

news, and your self-reproach on the subject of Mrs. Stockwell made me laugh heartily. I rather wondered that Johncock,[1] the only person in the room, could help laughing too. I had not heard before of her having the measles. Mrs. H. and Alethea's staying till Friday was quite new to me; a good plan, however. I could not have settled it better myself, and am glad they found so much in the house to approve, and I hope they will ask Martha to visit them. I admire the sagacity and taste of Charlotte Williams. Those large dark eyes always judge well. I will compliment her by naming a heroine after her.

Edward has had all the particulars of the building, etc., read to him twice over, and seems very well satisfied. A narrow door to the pantry is the only subject of solicitude; it is certainly just the door which should not be narrow, on account of the trays; but if a case of necessity, it must be borne.

I knew there was sugar in the tin, but had no idea of there being enough to last through your company. All the better. You ought not to think this new loaf better than the other, because that was the first of five which all came together. Something of fancy, perhaps, and something of imagination.

Dear Mrs. Digweed! I cannot bear that she

[1] The butler at Godmersham.

should not be foolishly happy after a ball. I hope Miss Yates and her companions were all well the day after their arrival. I am thoroughly rejoiced that Miss Benn has placed herself in lodgings, though I hope they may not be long necessary.

No letter from Charles yet.

Southey's "Life of Nelson." I am tired of "Lives of Nelson," being that I never read any. I will read this, however, if Frank is mentioned in it.

Here am I in Kent, with one brother in the same county and another brother's wife, and see nothing of them, which seems unnatural. It will not last so forever, I trust. I should like to have Mrs. F. A. and her children here for a week, but not a syllable of that nature is ever breathed. I wish her last visit had not been so long a one.

I wonder whether Mrs. Tilson has ever lain-in. Mention it if it ever comes to your knowledge, and we shall hear of it by the same post from Henry.

Mr. Rob. Mascall breakfasted here; he eats a great deal of butter. I dined upon goose yesterday, which, I hope, will secure a good sale of my second edition. Have you any tomatas? Fanny and I regale on them every day.

Disastrous letters from the Plumptres and Oxendens. Refusals everywhere — a blank *partout* — and it is not quite certain whether we go or not; something may depend upon the disposition of Uncle Edward when he comes, and upon what

we hear at Chilham Castle this morning, for we are going to pay visits. We are going to each house at Chilham and to Mystole. I shall like seeing the Faggs. I shall like it all, except that we are to set out so early that I have not time to write as I would wish.

Edwd. Bridges's friend is a Mr. Hawker, I find, not Harpur. I would not have you sleep in such an error for the world.

My brother desires his best love and thanks for all your information. He hopes the roots of the old beech have been dug away enough to allow a proper covering of mould and turf. He is sorry for the necessity of building the new coin, but hopes they will contrive that the doorway should be of the usual width, — if it must be contracted on one side, by widening it on the other. The appearance need not signify. And he desires me to say that your being at Chawton when he is will be quite necessary. You cannot think it more indispensable than he does. He is very much obliged to you for your attention to everything. Have you any idea of returning with him to Henrietta Street and finishing your visit then? Tell me your sweet little innocent ideas.

Everything of love and kindness, proper and improper, must now suffice.

Yours very affectionately, J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

XLIX.

Godmersham Park, Thursday (Oct. 14).

My dearest Cassandra, — Now I will prepare for Mr. Lushington, and as it will be wisest also to prepare for his not coming, or my not getting a frank, I shall write very close from the first, and even leave room for the seal in the proper place. When I have followed up my last with this I shall feel somewhat less unworthy of you than the state of our correspondence now requires.

I left off in a great hurry to prepare for our morning visits. Of course was ready a good deal the first, and need not have hurried so much. Fanny wore her new gown and cap. I was surprised to find Mystole so pretty.

The ladies were at home. I was in luck, and saw Lady Fagg and all her five daughters, with an old Mrs. Hamilton, from Canterbury, and Mrs. and Miss Chapman, from Margate, into the bargain. I never saw so plain a family, — five sisters so very plain! They are as plain as the Foresters, or the Franfraddops, or the Seagraves, or the Rivers, excluding Sophy. Miss Sally Fagg has a pretty figure, and that comprises all the good looks of the family.

It was stupidish; Fanny did her part very well, but there was a lack of talk altogether, and the

three friends in the house only sat by and looked at us. However, Miss Chapman's name is Laura, and she had a double flounce to her gown. You really must get some flounces. Are not some of your large stock of white morning gowns just in a happy state for a flounce — too short? Nobody at home at either house in Chilham.

Edward Bridges and his friend did not forget to arrive. The friend is a Mr. Wigram, one of the three-and-twenty children of a great rich mercantile, Sir Robert Wigram, an old acquaintance of the Footes, but very recently known to Edward B. The history of his coming here is, that, intending to go from Ramsgate to Brighton, Edw. B. persuaded him to take Lenham on his way, which gave him the convenience of Mr. W.'s gig, and the comfort of not being alone there; but, probably thinking a few days of Gm. would be the cheapest and pleasantest way of entertaining his friend and himself, offered a visit here, and here they stay till to-morrow.

Mr. W. is about five or six-and-twenty, not ill-looking, and not agreeable. He is certainly no addition. A sort of cool, gentlemanlike manner, but very silent. They say his name is Henry, a proof how unequally the gifts of fortune are bestowed. I have seen many a John and Thomas much more agreeable.

We have got rid of Mr. R. Mascall, however. I

did not like him, either. He talks too much, and is conceited, besides having a vulgarly shaped mouth. He slept here on Tuesday, so that yesterday Fanny and I sat down to breakfast with six gentlemen to admire us.

We did not go to the ball. It was left to her to decide, and at last she determined against it. She knew that it would be a sacrifice on the part of her father and brothers if they went, and I hope it will prove that she has not sacrificed much. It is not likely that there should have been anybody there whom she would care for. I was very glad to be spared the trouble of dressing and going, and being weary before it was half over; so my gown and my cap are still unworn. It will appear at last, perhaps, that I might have done without either. I produced my brown bombazine yesterday, and it was very much admired indeed, and I like it better than ever.

You have given many particulars of the state of Chawton House, but still we want more. Edward wants to be expressly told that all the round tower, etc., is entirely down, and the door from the best room stopped up; he does not know enough of the appearance of things in that quarter.

He heard from Bath yesterday. Lady B. continues very well, and Dr. Parry's opinion is, that while the water agrees with her she ought to remain there, which throws their coming away at a

greater uncertainty than we had supposed. It will end, perhaps, in a fit of the gout, which may prevent her coming away. Louisa thinks her mother's being so well may be quite as much owing to her being so much out of doors as to the water. Lady B. is going to try the hot pump, the Cross bath being about to be painted. Louisa is particularly well herself, and thinks the water has been of use to her. She mentioned our inquiries, etc., to Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Evelyn, and had their best compliments and thanks to give in return. Dr. Parry does not expect Mr. E. to last much longer.

Only think of Mrs. Holder's being dead! Poor woman, she has done the only thing in the world she could possibly do to make one cease to abuse her. Now, if you please, Hooper must have it in his power to do more by his uncle. Lucky for the little girl. An Anne Ekins can hardly be so unfit for the care of a child as a Mrs. Holder.

A letter from Wrotham yesterday offering an early visit here, and Mr. and Mrs. Moore and one child are to come on Monday for ten days. I hope Charles and Fanny may not fix the same time, but if they come at all in October they must. What is the use of hoping? The two parties of children is the chief evil.

To be sure, here we are; the very thing has happened, or rather worse, — a letter from Charles this very morning, which gives us reason to sup-

pose they may come here to-day. It depends upon the weather, and the weather now is very fine. No difficulties are made, however, and, indeed, there will be no want of room; but I wish there were no Wigrams and Lushingtons in the way to fill up the table and make us such a motley set. I cannot spare Mr. Lushington either, because of his frank, but Mr. Wigram does no good to anybody. I cannot imagine how a man can have the impudence to come into a family party for three days, where he is quite a stranger, unless he knows himself to be agreeable on undoubted authority. He and Edw. B. are going to ride to Eastwell, and as the boys are hunting, and my brother is gone to Canty., Fanny and I have a quiet morning before us.

Edward has driven off poor Mrs. Salkeld. It was thought a good opportunity of doing something towards clearing the house. By her own desire Mrs. Fanny[1] is to be put in the room next the nursery, her baby in a little bed by her; and as Cassy is to have the closet within, and Betsey William's little hole, they will be all very snug together. I shall be most happy to see dear Charles, and he will be as happy as he can with a cross child, or some such care, pressing on him at the time. I should be very happy in the idea of seeing little Cassy again, too, did not I fear

[1] Mrs. Charles Austen, *née* Fanny Palmer.

she would disappoint me by some immediate disagreeableness. . . .

The comfort of the billiard-table here is very great; it draws all the gentlemen to it whenever they are within, especially after dinner, so that my brother, Fanny, and I have the library to ourselves in delightful quiet. There is no truth in the report of G. Hatton being to marry Miss Wemyss. He desires it may be contradicted.

Have you done anything about our present to Miss Benn? I suppose she must have a bed at my mother's whenever she dines there. How will they manage as to inviting her when you are gone? and if they invite, how will they continue to entertain her?

Let me know as many of your parting arrangements as you can, as to wine, etc. I wonder whether the ink-bottle has been filled. Does butcher's meat keep up at the same price, and is not bread lower than 2*s.* 6*d.*? Mary's blue gown! My mother must be in agonies. I have a great mind to have my blue gown dyed some time or other. I proposed it once to you, and you made some objection, I forget what. It is the fashion of flounces that gives it particular expediency.

Mrs. and Miss Wildman have just been here. Miss is very plain. I wish Lady B. may be returned before we leave Gm., that Fanny may

spend the time of her father's absence at Goodnestone, which is what she would prefer.

Friday. — They came last night at about seven. We had given them up, but I still expected them to come. Dessert was nearly over; a better time for arriving than an hour and a half earlier. They were late because they did not set out earlier, and did not allow time enough. Charles did not aim at more than reaching Sittingbourne by three, which could not have brought them here by dinner-time. They had a very rough passage; he would not have ventured if he had known how bad it would be.

However, here they are, safe and well, just like their own nice selves, Fanny looking as neat and white this morning as possible, and dear Charles all affectionate, placid, quiet, cheerful good-humor. They are both looking very well, but poor little Cassy is grown extremely thin, and looks poorly. I hope a week's country air and exercise may do her good. I am sorry to say it can be but a week. The baby does not appear so large in proportion as she was, nor quite so pretty, but I have seen very little of her. Cassy was too tired and bewildered just at first to seem to know anybody. We met them in the hall — the women and girl part of us — but before we reached the library she kissed me very affectionately, and has since seemed to recollect me in the same way.

It was quite an evening of confusion, as you may suppose. At first we were all walking about from one part of the house to the other; then came a fresh dinner in the breakfast-room for Charles and his wife, which Fanny and I attended; then we moved into the library, were joined by the dining-room people, were introduced, and so forth; and then we had tea and coffee, which was not over till past ten. Billiards again drew all the odd ones away; and Edward, Charles, the two Fannies, and I sat snugly talking. I shall be glad to have our numbers a little reduced, and by the time you receive this we shall be only a family, though a large family, party. Mr. Lushington goes to-morrow.

Now I must speak of him, and I like him very much. I am sure he is clever, and a man of taste. He got a volume of Milton last night, and spoke of it with warmth. He is quite an M. P., very smiling, with an exceeding good address and readiness of language. I am rather in love with him. I dare say he is ambitious and insincere. He puts me in mind of Mr. Dundas. He has a wide smiling mouth, and very good teeth, and something the same complexion and nose. He is a much shorter man, with Martha's leave. Does Martha never hear from Mrs. Craven? Is Mrs. Craven never at home?

We breakfasted in the dining-room to-day, and

are now all pretty well dispersed and quiet. Charles and George are gone out shooting together, to Winnigates and Seaton Wood. I asked on purpose to tell Henry. Mr. Lushington and Edwd. are gone some other way. I wish Charles may kill something; but this high wind is against their sport.

Lady Williams is living at the Rose at Sittingbourne; they called upon her yesterday; she cannot live at Sheerness, and as soon as she gets to Sittingbourne is quite well. In return for all your matches, I announce that her brother William is going to marry a Miss Austen, of a Wiltshire family, who say they are related to us.

I talk to Cassy about Chawton; she remembers much, but does not volunteer on the subject. Poor little love! I wish she were not so very Palmery, but it seems stronger than ever. I never knew a wife's family features have such undue influence.

Papa and mamma have not yet made up their mind as to parting with her or not; the chief, indeed the only, difficulty with mamma is a very reasonable one, the child's being very unwilling to leave them. When it was mentioned to her she did not like the idea of it at all. At the same time she has been suffering so much lately from sea-sickness that her mamma cannot bear to have her much on board this winter. Charles is less

inclined to part with her. I do not know how it will end, or what is to determine it. He desires his best love to you, and has not written because he has not been able to decide. They are both very sensible of your kindness on the occasion.

I have made Charles furnish me with something to say about young Kendall. He is going on very well. When he first joined the "Namur," my brother did not find him forward enough to be what they call put in the office, and therefore placed him under the schoolmaster; but he is very much improved, and goes into the office now every afternoon, still attending school in the morning.

This cold weather comes very fortunately for Edward's nerves, with such a house full; it suits him exactly; he is all alive and cheerful. Poor James, on the contrary, must be running his toes into the fire. I find that Mary Jane Fowle was very near returning with her brother and paying them a visit on board. I forget exactly what hindered her; I believe the Cheltenham scheme. I am glad something did. They are to go to Cheltenham on Monday se'nnight. I don't vouch for their going, you know; it only comes from one of the family.

Now I think I have written you a good-sized letter, and may deserve whatever I can get in reply. Infinities of love. I must distinguish that

of Fanny, senior, who particularly desires to be remembered to you all.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

Faversham, Oct. 15, 1813.

Miss Austen, Chawton, Alton, Hants.

Per S. R. Lushington.

L.

Godmersham Park, Oct. 18.

My dear Aunt Cassandra, — I am very much obliged to you for your long letter and for the nice account of Chawton. We are all very glad to hear that the Adams are gone, and hope Dame Libscombe will be more happy now with her deaffy child, as she calls it, but I am afraid there is not much chance of her remaining long sole mistress of her house.

I am sorry you had not any better news to send us of our hare, poor little thing! I thought it would not live long in that *Pondy House;* I don't wonder that Mary Doe is very sorry it is dead, because we promised her that if it was alive when we came back to Chawton, we would reward her for her trouble.

Papa is much obliged to you for ordering the scrubby firs to be cut down; I think he was rather frightened at first about the great oak. Fanny quite believed it, for she exclaimed, "Dear me,

what a pity, how could they be so stupid!" I hope by this time they have put up some hurdles for the sheep, or turned out the cart-horses from the lawn.

Pray tell grandmamma that we have begun getting seeds for her; I hope we shall be able to get her a nice collection, but I am afraid this wet weather is very much against them. How glad I am to hear she has had such good success with her chickens, but I wish there had been more bantams amongst them. I am very sorry to hear of poor Lizzie's fate.

I must now tell you something about our poor people. I believe you know old Mary Croucher; she gets *maderer* and *maderer* every day. Aunt Jane has been to see her, but it was on one of her rational days. Poor Will Amos hopes your skewers are doing well; he has left his house in the poor Row, and lives in a barn at Builting. We asked him why he went away, and he said the fleas were so starved when he came back from Chawton that they all flew upon him and *eenermost* eat him up.

How unlucky it is that the weather is so wet! Poor Uncle Charles has come home half drowned every day.

I don't think little Fanny is quite so pretty as she was; one reason is because she wears short petticoats, I believe. I hope Cook is better; she

was very unwell the day we went away. Papa has given me half-a-dozen new pencils, which are very good ones indeed; I draw every other day. I hope you go and whip Lucy Chalcraft every night.

Miss Clewes begs me to give her very best respects to you; she is very much obliged to you for your kind inquiries after her. Pray give my duty to grandmamma and love to Miss Floyd. I remain, my dear Aunt Cassandra, your very affectionate niece,

ELIZTH. KNIGHT.

Thursday. — I think Lizzy's letter will entertain you. Thank you for yours just received. To-morrow shall be fine if possible. You will be at Guildford before our party set off. They only go to Key Street, as Mr. Street the Purser lives there, and they have promised to dine and sleep with him.

Cassy's looks are much mended. She agrees pretty well with her cousins, but is not quite happy among them; they are too many and too boisterous for her. I have given her your message, but she said nothing, and did not look as if the idea of going to Chawton again was a pleasant one. They have Edward's carriage to Ospringe.

I think I have just done a good deed, — extracted Charles from his wife and children upstairs, and made him get ready to go out shooting, and not keep Mr. Moore waiting any longer.

Mr. and Mrs. Sherer and Joseph dined here yesterday very prettily. Edw. and Geo. were absent, — gone for a night to Eastling. The two Fannies went to Canty. in the morning, and took Lou. and Cass. to try on new stays. Harriet and I had a comfortable walk together. She desires her best love to you and kind remembrance to Henry. Fanny's best love also. I fancy there is to be another party to Canty. to-morrow, — Mr. and Mrs. Moore and me.

Edward thanks Henry for his letter. We are most happy to hear he is so much better. I depend upon you for letting me know what he wishes as to my staying with him or not; you will be able to find out, I dare say. I had intended to beg you would bring one of my nightcaps with you, in case of my staying, but forgot it when I wrote on Tuesday. Edward is much concerned about his pond; he cannot now doubt the fact of its running out, which he was resolved to do as long as possible.

I suppose my mother will like to have me write to her. I shall try at least.

No; I have never seen the death of Mrs. Crabbe. I have only just been making out from one of his prefaces that he probably was married. It is almost ridiculous. Poor woman! I will comfort him as well as I can, but I do not undertake to be good to her children. She had better not leave any.

Edw. and Geo. set off this day week for Oxford. Our party will then be very small, as the Moores will be going about the same time. To enliven us, Fanny proposes spending a few days soon afterwards at Fredville. It will really be a good opportunity, as her father will have a companion. We shall all three go to Wrotham, but Edwd. and I stay only a night perhaps. Love to Mr. Tilson.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

Miss Austen,
10 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London.

LI.

Godmersham Park, Wednesday (Nov. 3).

My dearest Cassandra, — I will keep this celebrated birthday by writing to you; and as my pen seems inclined to write large, I will put my lines very close together. I had but just time to enjoy your letter yesterday before Edward and I set off in the chair for Canty., and I allowed him to hear the chief of it as we went along.

We rejoice sincerely in Henry's gaining ground as he does, and hope there will be weather for him to get out every day this week, as the likeliest way of making him equal to what he plans for the next. If he is tolerably well, the going into Oxfordshire will make him better, by making him happier.

Can it be that I have not given you the minutiæ of Edward's plans? See, here they are: To

go to Wrotham on Saturday the 13th, spend Sunday there, and be in town on Monday to dinner, and if agreeable to Henry, spend one whole day with him, which day is likely to be Tuesday, and so go down to Chawton on Wednesday.

But now I cannot be quite easy without staying a little while with Henry, unless he wishes it otherwise; his illness and the dull time of year together make me feel that it would be horrible of me not to offer to remain with him, and therefore unless you know of any objection, I wish you would tell him with my best love that I shall be most happy to spend ten days or a fortnight in Henrietta St., if he will accept me. I do not offer more than a fortnight, because I shall then have been some time from home; but it will be a great pleasure to be with him, as it always is. I have the less regret and scruple on your account, because I shall see you for a day and a half, and because you will have Edward for at least a week. My scheme is to take Bookham in my way home for a few days, and my hope that Henry will be so good as to send me some part of the way thither. I have a most kind repetition of Mrs. Cooke's two or three dozen invitations, with the offer of meeting me anywhere in one of her airings.

Fanny's cold is much better. By dosing and keeping her room on Sunday, she got rid of the worst of it, but I am rather afraid of what this

day may do for her; she is gone to Canty. with Miss Clewes, Liz., and Ma^{rnne}, and it is but roughish weather for any one in a tender state. Miss Clewes has been going to Canty. ever since her return, and it is now just accomplishing.

Edward and I had a delightful morning for our drive there, I enjoyed it thoroughly; but the day turned off before we were ready, and we came home in some rain and the apprehension of a great deal. It has not done us any harm, however. He went to inspect the gaol, as a visiting magistrate, and took me with him. I was gratified, and went through all the feelings which people must go through, I think, in visiting such a building. We paid no other visits, only walked about snugly together, and shopped. I bought a concert ticket and a sprig of flowers for my old age.

To vary the subject from gay to grave with inimitable address, I shall now tell you something of the Bath party — and still a Bath party they are, for a fit of the gout came on last week. The accounts of Lady B. are as good as can be under such a circumstance; Dr. P. says it appears a good sort of gout, and her spirits are better than usual, but as to her coming away, it is of course all uncertainty. I have very little doubt of Edward's going down to Bath, if they have not left it when he is in Hampshire; if he does, he will go on from Steventon, and then return direct to

London, without coming back to Chawton. This detention does not suit his feelings. It may be rather a good thing, however, that Dr. P. should see Lady B. with the gout on her. Harriot was quite wishing for it.

The day seems to improve. I wish my pen would too.

Sweet Mr. Ogle! I dare say he sees all the panoramas for nothing, has free admittance everywhere; he is so delightful! Now, you need not see anybody else.

I am glad to hear of our being likely to have a peep at Charles and Fanny at Christmas, but do not force poor Cass. to stay if she hates it. You have done very right as to Mrs. F. A. Your tidings of S. and S. give me pleasure. I have never seen it advertised.

Harriot, in a letter to Fanny to-day, inquires whether they sell cloths for pelisses at Bedford House, and, if they do, will be very much obliged to you to desire them to send her down patterns, with the width and prices; they may go from Charing Cross almost any day in the week, but if it is a ready-money house it will not do, for the *bru* of *feu* the Archbishop says she cannot pay for it immediately. Fanny and I suspect they do not deal in the article.

The Sherers, I believe, are now really going to go; Joseph has had a bed here the last two

nights, and I do not know whether this is not the day of moving. Mrs. Sherer called yesterday to take leave. The weather looks worse again.

We dine at Chilham Castle to-morrow, and I expect to find some amusement, but more from the concert the next day, as I am sure of seeing several that I want to see. We are to meet a party from Goodnestone, Lady B., Miss Hawley, and Lucy Foote, and I am to meet Mrs. Harrison, and we are to talk about Ben and Anna. "My dear Mrs. Harrison," I shall say, "I am afraid the young man has some of your family madness; and though there often appears to be something of madness in Anna too, I think she inherits more of it from her mother's family than from ours." That is what I shall say, and I think she will find it difficult to answer me.

I took up your letter again to refresh me, being somewhat tired, and was struck with the prettiness of the hand: it is really a very pretty hand now and then, — so small and so neat! I wish I could get as much into a sheet of paper.[1] Another time I will take two days to make a letter in: it is fatiguing to write a whole long one at once. I hope to hear from you again on Sunday and again

[1] I cannot pass this paragraph over without remarking that it is hardly possible to imagine anything neater or prettier than Jane's own hand. Most of her letters are beautifully written, and the MS. of her "Lady Susan" remarkably so. — *Note by Lord* Brabourne.

on Friday, the day before we move. On Monday, I suppose, you will be going to Streatham, to see quiet Mr. Hill and eat very bad baker's bread.

A fall in bread by the by. I hope my mother's bill next week will show it. I have had a very comfortable letter from her, one of her foolscap sheets quite full of little home news. Anna was there the first of the two days. An Anna sent away and an Anna fetched are different things. This will be an excellent time for Ben to pay his visit, now that we, the formidables, are absent.

I did not mean to eat, but Mr. Johncock has brought in the tray, so I must. I am all alone. Edward is gone into his woods. At this present time I have five tables, eight-and-twenty chairs, and two fires all to myself.

Miss Clewes is to be invited to go to the concert with us; there will be my brother's place and ticket for her, as he cannot go. He and the other connections of the Cages are to meet at Milgate that very day, to consult about a proposed alteration of the Maidstone road, in which the Cages are very much interested. Sir Brook comes here in the morning, and they are to be joined by Mr. Deedes at Ashford. The loss of the concert will be no great evil to the Squire. We shall be a party of three ladies therefore, and to meet three ladies.

What a convenient carriage Henry's is, to his friends in general! Who has it next? I am glad William's going is voluntary, and on no worse grounds. An inclination for the country is a venial fault. He has more of Cowper than of Johnson in him, — fonder of tame hares and blank verse than of the full tide of human existence at Charing Cross.

Oh! I have more of such sweet flattery from Miss Sharp. She is an excellent kind friend. I am read and admired in Ireland too. There is a Mrs. Fletcher, the wife of a judge, an old lady, and very good and very clever, who is all curiosity to know about me, — what I am like, and so forth. I am not known to her by name, however. This comes through Mrs. Carrick, not through Mrs. Gore. You are quite out there.

I do not despair of having my picture in the Exhibition at last, — all white and red, with my head on one side; or perhaps I may marry young Mr. D'Arblay. I suppose in the mean time I shall owe dear Henry a great deal of money for printing, etc.

I hope Mrs. Fletcher will indulge herself with S. and S. If I am to stay in H. S., and if you should be writing home soon, I wish you would be so good as to give a hint of it, for I am not likely to write there again these ten days, having written yesterday.

Fanny has set her heart upon its being a Mr. Brett who is going to marry a Miss Dora Best, of this country. I dare say Henry has no objection. Pray, where did the boys sleep?

The Deedes come here on Monday to stay till Friday, so that we shall end with a flourish the last canto. They bring Isabella and one of the grown-ups, and will come in for a Canty. ball on Thursday. I shall be glad to see them. Mrs. Deedes and I must talk rationally together, I suppose.

Edward does not write to Henry, because of my writing so often. God bless you. I shall be so glad to see you again, and I wish you many happy returns of this day. Poor Lord Howard! How he does cry about it!

Yours very truly, J. A.

Miss Austen,
10 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London.

LII.

Godmersham Park, Saturday (Nov. 6).

My dearest Cassandra, — Having half an hour before breakfast (very snug, in my own room, lovely morning, excellent fire — fancy me!) I will give you some account of the last two days. And yet, what is there to be told? I shall get foolishly minute unless I cut the matter short.

We met only the Bretons at Chilham Castle,

besides a Mr. and Mrs. Osborne and a Miss Lee staying in the house, and were only fourteen altogether. My brother and Fanny thought it the pleasantest party they had ever known there, and I was very well entertained by bits and scraps. I had long wanted to see Dr. Breton, and his wife amuses me very much with her affected refinement and elegance. Miss Lee I found very conversable; she admires Crabbe as she ought. She is at an age of reason, ten years older than myself at least. She was at the famous ball at Chilham Castle, so of course you remember her.

By the by, as I must leave off being young, I find many *douceurs* in being a sort of *chaperon*, for I am put on the sofa near the fire, and can drink as much wine as I like. We had music in the evening: Fanny and Miss Wildman played, and Mr. James Wildman sat close by and listened, or pretended to listen.

Yesterday was a day of dissipation all through: first came Sir Brook to dissipate us before breakfast; then there was a call from Mr. Sherer, then a regular morning visit from Lady Honeywood in her way home from Eastwell; then Sir Brook and Edward set off; then we dined (five in number) at half-past four; then we had coffee; and at six Miss Clewes, Fanny, and I drove away. We had a beautiful night for our frisks. We were earlier than we need have been, but after a time

Lady B. and her two companions appeared, — we had kept places for them; and there we sat, all six in a row, under a side wall, I between Lucy Foote and Miss Clewes.

Lady B. was much what I expected; I could not determine whether she was rather handsome or very plain. I liked her for being in a hurry to have the concert over and get away, and for getting away at last with a great deal of decision and promptness, not waiting to compliment and dawdle and fuss about seeing dear Fanny, who was half the evening in another part of the room with her friends the Plumptres. I am growing too minute, so I will go to breakfast.

When the concert was over, Mrs. Harrison and I found each other out, and had a very comfortable little complimentary friendly chat. She is a sweet woman, — still quite a sweet woman in herself, and so like her sister! I could almost have thought I was speaking to Mrs. Lefroy. She introduced me to her daughter, whom I think pretty, but most dutifully inferior to *la Mère Beauté*. The Faggs and the Hammonds were there, — Wm. Hammond the only young man of renown. Miss looked very handsome, but I prefer her little smiling flirting sister Julia.

I was just introduced at last to Mary Plumptre, but I should hardly know her again. She was delighted with me, however, good enthusiastic soul!

And Lady B. found me handsomer than she expected, so you see I am not so very bad as you might think for.

It was twelve before we reached home. We were all dog-tired, but pretty well to-day: Miss Clewes says she has not caught cold, and Fanny's does not seem worse. I was so tired that I began to wonder how I should get through the ball next Thursday; but there will be so much more variety then in walking about, and probably so much less heat, that perhaps I may not feel it more. My china crape is still kept for the ball. Enough of the concert.

I had a letter from Mary yesterday. They travelled down to Cheltenham last Monday very safely, and are certainly to be there a month. Bath is still Bath. The H. Bridges must quit them early next week, and Louisa seems not quite to despair of their all moving together, but to those who see at a distance there appears no chance of it. Dr. Parry does not want to keep Lady B. at Bath when she can once move. That is lucky. You will see poor Mr. Evelyn's death.

Since I wrote last, my 2nd edit. has stared me in the face. Mary tells me that Eliza means to buy it. I wish she may. It can hardly depend upon any more Fyfield Estates. I cannot help hoping that many will feel themselves obliged to buy it. I shall not mind imagining it a disagree-

able duty to them, so as they do it. Mary heard before she left home that it was very much admired at Cheltenham, and that it was given to Miss Hamilton. It is pleasant to have such a respectable writer named. I cannot tire you, I am sure, on this subject, or I would apologize.

What weather, and what news! We have enough to do to admire them both. I hope you derive your full share of enjoyment from each.

I have extended my lights and increased my acquaintance a good deal within these two days. Lady Honeywood you know; I did not sit near enough to be a perfect judge, but I thought her extremely pretty, and her manners have all the recommendations of ease and good-humor and unaffectedness; and going about with four horses and nicely dressed herself, she is altogether a perfect sort of woman.

Oh, and I saw Mr. Gipps last night, — the useful Mr. Gipps, whose attentions came in as acceptably to us in handing us to the carriage, for want of a better man, as they did to Emma Plumptre. I thought him rather a good-looking little man.

I long for your letter to-morrow, particularly that I may know my fate as to London. My first wish is that Henry should really choose what he likes best; I shall certainly not be sorry if he does not want me. Morning church to-morrow; I shall come back with impatient feelings.

The Sherers are gone, but the Pagets are not come: we shall therefore have Mr. S. again. Mr. Paget acts like an unsteady man. Dr. Hant, however, gives him a very good character; what is wrong is to be imputed to the lady. I dare say the house likes female government.

I have a nice long black and red letter from Charles, but not communicating much that I did not know.

There is some chance of a good ball next week, as far as females go. Lady Bridges may perhaps be there with some Knatchbulls. Mrs. Harrison perhaps, with Miss Oxenden and the Miss Papillons; and if Mrs. Harrison, then Lady Fagg will come.

The shades of evening are descending, and I resume my interesting narrative. Sir Brook and my brother came back about four, and Sir Brook almost immediately set forward again to Goodnestone. We are to have Edwd. B. to-morrow, to pay us another Sunday's visit, — the last, for more reasons than one; they all come home on the same day that we go. The Deedes do not come till Tuesday; Sophia is to be the comer. She is a disputable beauty that I want much to see. Lady Eliz. Hatton and Annamaria called here this morning. Yes, they called; but I do not think I can say anything more about them. They came, and they sat, and they went.

Sunday. — Dearest Henry! What a turn he

has for being ill, and what a thing bile is! This attack has probably been brought on in part by his previous confinement and anxiety; but, however it came, I hope it is going fast, and that you will be able to send a very good account of him on Tuesday. As I hear on Wednesday, of course I shall not expect to hear again on Friday. Perhaps a letter to Wrotham would not have an ill effect.

We are to be off on Saturday before the post comes in, as Edward takes his own horses all the way. He talks of nine o'clock. We shall bait at Lenham.

Excellent sweetness of you to send me such a nice long letter; it made its appearance, with one from my mother, soon after I and my impatient feelings walked in. How glad I am that I did what I did! I was only afraid that you might think the offer superfluous, but you have set my heart at ease. Tell Henry that I will stay with him, let it be ever so disagreeable to him.

Oh, dear me! I have not time on paper for half that I want to say. There have been two letters from Oxford, — one from George yesterday. They got there very safely, — Edwd. two hours behind the coach, having lost his way in leaving London. George writes cheerfully and quietly; hopes to have Utterson's rooms soon; went to lecture on Wednesday, states some of his expenses, and concludes with saying, "I am afraid

I shall be poor." I am glad he thinks about it so soon. I believe there is no private tutor yet chosen, but my brother is to hear from Edwd. on the subject shortly.

You, and Mrs. H., and Catherine, and Alethea going about together in Henry's carriage seeing sights — I am not used to the idea of it yet. All that you are to see of Streatham, seen already! Your Streatham and my Bookham may go hang. The prospect of being taken down to Chawton by Henry perfects the plan to me. I was in hopes of your seeing some illuminations, and you have seen them. "I thought you would come, and you did come." I am sorry he is not to come from the Baltic sooner. Poor Mary!

My brother has a letter from Louisa to-day of an unwelcome nature; they are to spend the winter at Bath. It was just decided on. Dr. Parry wished it, not from thinking the water necessary to Lady B., but that he might be better able to judge how far his treatment of her, which is totally different from anything she had been used to, is right; and I suppose he will not mind having a few more of her Ladyship's guineas. His system is a lowering one. He took twelve ounces of blood from her when the gout appeared, and forbids wine, etc. Hitherto the plan agrees with her. She is very well satisfied to stay, but it is a sore disappointment to Louisa and Fanny.

The H. Bridges leave them on Tuesday, and they mean to move into a smaller house; you may guess how Edward feels. There can be no doubt of his going to Bath now; I should not wonder if he brought Fanny Cage back with him.

You shall hear from me once more, some day or other.

Yours very affectionately, J. A.

We do not like Mr. Hampson's scheme.

Miss Austen,
10 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London.

LIII.

Henrietta St., Wednesday (March 2, 1814).

We had altogether a very good journey, and everything at Cobham was comfortable. I could not pay Mr. Harrington! That was the only alas! of the business. I shall therefore return his bill, and my mother's 2*l.*, that you may try your luck. We did not begin reading till Bentley Green. Henry's approbation is hitherto even equal to my wishes. He says it is different from the other two, but does not appear to think it at all inferior. He has only married Mrs. R.[1] I am afraid he has gone through the most entertaining part. He took to Lady B. and Mrs. N.[2] most

[1] Mrs. Rushworth in "Mansfield Park."
[2] Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris.

kindly, and gives great praise to the drawing of the characters. He understands them all, likes Fanny, and, I think, foresees how it will all be. I finished the "Heroine" last night, and was very much amused by it. I wonder James did not like it better. It diverted me exceedingly. We went to bed at ten. I was very tired, but slept to a miracle, and am lovely to-day, and at present Henry seems to have no complaint. We left Cobham at half-past eight, stopped to bait and breakfast at Kingston, and were in this house considerably before two. Nice smiling Mr. Barlowe met us at the door, and, in reply to inquiries after news, said that peace was generally expected. I have taken possession of my bedroom, unpacked my bandbox, sent Miss P.'s two letters to the twopenny post, been visited by M^d. B., and am now writing by myself at the new table in the front room. It is snowing. We had some snowstorms yesterday, and a smart frost at night, which gave us a hard road from Cobham to Kingston; but as it was then getting dirty and heavy, Henry had a pair of leaders put on to the bottom of Sloane St. His own horses, therefore, cannot have had hard work. I watched for veils as we drove through the streets, and had the pleasure of seeing several upon vulgar heads. And now, how do you all do? — you in particular, after the worry of yesterday and the day before. I hope Martha

had a pleasant visit again, and that you and my mother could eat your beef-pudding. Depend upon my thinking of the chimney-sweeper as soon as I wake to-morrow. Places are secured at Drury Lane for Saturday, but so great is the rage for seeing Kean that only a third and fourth row could be got; as it is in a front box, however, I hope we shall do pretty well — Shylock, a good play for Fanny — she cannot be much affected, I think. Mrs. Perigord has just been here. She tells me that we owe her master for the silk-dyeing. My poor old muslin has never been dyed yet. It has been promised to be done several times. What wicked people dyers are! They begin with dipping their own souls in scarlet sin. It is evening. We have drank tea, and I have torn through the third vol. of the "Heroine." I do not think it falls off. It is a delightful burlesque, particularly on the Radcliffe style. Henry is going on with "Mansfield Park." He admires H. Crawford: I mean properly, as a clever, pleasant man. I tell you all the good I can, as I know how much you will enjoy it. We hear that Mr. Kean is more admired than ever. There are no good places to be got in Drury Lane for the next fortnight, but Henry means to secure some for Saturday fortnight, when you are reckoned upon. Give my love to little Cass. I hope she found my bed comfortable last night. I have

seen nobody in London yet with such a long chin as Dr. Syntax, nor anybody quite so large as Gogmagolicus.

Yours aff^ly, J. Austen.

LIV.

Henrietta St., Wednesday (March 9).

Well, we went to the play again last night, and as we were out a great part of the morning too, shopping, and seeing the Indian jugglers, I am very glad to be quiet now till dressing-time. We are to dine at the Tilsons', and to-morrow at Mr. Spencer's.

We had not done breakfast yesterday when Mr. J. Plumptre appeared to say that he had secured a box. Henry asked him to dine here, which I fancy he was very happy to do, and so at five o'clock we four sat down to table together, while the master of the house was preparing for going out himself. The "Farmer's Wife" is a musical thing in three acts, and as Edward was steady in not staying for anything more, we were at home before ten.

Fanny and Mr. J. P. are delighted with Miss S., and her merit in singing is, I dare say, very great; that she gave me no pleasure is no reflection upon her, nor, I hope, upon myself, being what Nature made me on that article. All that

I am sensible of in Miss S. is a pleasing person and no skill in acting. We had Mathews, Liston, and Emery; of course, some amusement.

Our friends were off before half-past eight this morning, and had the prospect of a heavy cold journey before them. I think they both liked their visit very much. I am sure Fanny did. Henry sees decided attachment between her and his new acquaintance.

I have a cold, too, as well as my mother and Martha. Let it be a generous emulation between us which can get rid of it first.

I wear my gauze gown to-day, long sleeves and all. I shall see how they succeed, but as yet I have no reason to suppose long sleeves are allowable. I have lowered the bosom, especially at the corners, and plaited black satin ribbon round the top. Such will be my costume of vine-leaves and paste.

Prepare for a play the very first evening, I rather think Covent Garden, to see Young in "Richard." I have answered for your little companion's being conveyed to Keppel St. immediately. I have never yet been able to get there myself, but hope I shall soon.

What cruel weather this is! and here is Lord Portsmouth married, too, to Miss Hanson.[1]

[1] His second wife. He died in 1853, and was succeeded by his brother, the father of the present earl.

Henry has finished "Mansfield Park," and his approbation has not lessened. He found the last half of the last volume extremely interesting.

I suppose my mother recollects that she gave me no money for paying Brecknell and Twining, and my funds will not supply enough.

We are home in such good time that I can finish my letter to-night, which will be better than getting up to do it to-morrow, especially as, on account of my cold, which has been very heavy in my head this evening, I rather think of lying in bed later than usual. I would not but be well enough to go to Hertford St. on any account.

We met only Genl. Chowne to-day, who has not much to say for himself. I was ready to laugh at the remembrance of Frederick, and such a different Frederick as we chose to fancy him to the real Christopher!

Mrs. Tilson had long sleeves, too, and she assured me that they are worn in the evening by many. I was glad to hear this. She dines here, I believe, next Tuesday.

On Friday we are to be snug with only Mr. Barlowe and an evening of business. I am so pleased that the mead is brewed. Love to all. I have written to Mrs. Hill, and care for nobody.

Yours affectionately, J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favor of Mr. Gray.

LV.

Chawton, Tuesday (June 13).

My dearest Cassandra, — Fanny takes my mother to Alton this morning, which gives me an opportunity of sending you a few lines without any other trouble than that of writing them.

This is a delightful day in the country, and I hope not much too hot for town. Well, you had a good journey, I trust, and all that, and not rain enough to spoil your bonnet. It appeared so likely to be a wet evening that I went up to the Gt. House between three and four, and dawdled away an hour very comfortably, though Edwd. was not very brisk. The air was clearer in the evening, and he was better. We all five walked together into the kitchen garden and along the Gosport road, and they drank tea with us.

You will be glad to hear that G. Turner has another situation, something in the cow line, near Rumsey, and he wishes to move immediately, which is not likely to be inconvenient to anybody.

The new nurseryman at Alton comes this morning to value the crops in the garden.

The only letter to-day is from Mrs. Cooke to me. They do not leave home till July, and want me to come to them, according to my promise.

And, after considering everything, I have resolved on going. My companions promote it. I will not go, however, till after Edward is gone, that he may feel he has a somebody to give memorandums to, to the last. I must give up all help from his carriage, of course. And, at any rate, it must be such an excess of expense that I have quite made up my mind to it, and do not mean to care.

I have been thinking of Triggs and the chair, you may be sure, but I know it will end in posting. They will meet me at Guildford.

In addition to their standing claims on me they admire "Mansfield Park" exceedingly. Mr. Cooke says "it is the most sensible novel he ever read," and the manner in which I treat the clergy delights them very much. Altogether, I must go, and I want you to join me there when your visit in Henrietta St. is over. Put this into your capacious head.

Take care of yourself, and do not be trampled to death in running after the Emperor. The report in Alton yesterday was that they would certainly travel this road either to or from Portsmouth. I long to know what this bow of the Prince's will produce.

I saw Mrs. Andrews yesterday. Mrs. Browning had seen her before. She is very glad to send an Elizabeth.

Miss Benn continues the same. Mr. Curtis,

however, saw her yesterday, and said her hand was going on as well as possible. Accept our best love.

Yours very affectionately,

J. AUSTEN.

Miss AUSTEN, 10 Henrietta Street,
By favor of Mr. GRAY.

LVI.

THURSDAY (June 23).

DEAREST CASSANDRA, — I received your pretty letter while the children were drinking tea with us, as Mr. Louch was so obliging as to walk over with it. Your good account of everybody made us very happy.

I heard yesterday from Frank. When he began his letter he hoped to be here on Monday, but before it was ended he had been told that the naval review would not take place till Friday, which would probably occasion him some delay, as he cannot get some necessary business of his own attended to while Portsmouth is in such a bustle. I hope Fanny has seen the Emperor, and then I may fairly wish them all away. I go to-morrow, and hope for some delays and adventures.

My mother's wood is brought in, but, by some mistake, no bavins. She must therefore buy some.

Henry at White's! Oh, what a Henry! I do not know what to wish as to Miss B., so I will hold my tongue and my wishes.

Sackree and the children set off yesterday, and have not been returned back upon us. They were all very well the evening before. We had handsome presents from the Gt. House yesterday, — a ham and the four leeches. Sackree has left some shirts of her master's at the school, which, finished or unfinished, she begs to have sent by Henry and Wm. Mr. Hinton is expected home soon, which is a good thing for the shirts.

We have called upon Miss Dusantoy and Miss Papillon, and been very pretty. Miss D. has a great idea of being Fanny Price, — she and her youngest sister together, who is named Fanny.

Miss Benn has drank tea with the Prowtings, and, I believe, comes to us this evening. She has still a swelling about the forefinger and a little discharge, and does not seem to be on the point of a perfect cure, but her spirits are good, and she will be most happy, I believe, to accept any invitation. The Clements are gone to Petersfield to look.

Only think of the Marquis of Granby being dead. I hope, if it please Heaven there should be another son, they will have better sponsors and less parade.

I certainly do not wish that Henry should think

again of getting me to town. I would rather return straight from Bookham; but if he really does propose it, I cannot say No to what will be so kindly intended. It could be but for a few days, however, as my mother would be quite disappointed by my exceeding the fortnight which I now talk of as the outside — at least, we could not both remain longer away comfortably.

The middle of July is Martha's time, as far as she has any time. She has left it to Mrs. Craven to fix the day. I wish she could get her money paid, for I fear her going at all depends upon that.

Instead of Bath the Deans Dundases have taken a house at Clifton — Richmond Terrace — and she is as glad of the change as even you and I should be, or almost. She will now be able to go on from Berks and visit them without any fears from heat.

This post has brought me a letter from Miss Sharpe. Poor thing! she has been suffering indeed, but is now in a comparative state of comfort. She is at Sir W. P.'s, in Yorkshire, with the children, and there is no appearance of her quitting them. Of course we lose the pleasure of seeing her here. She writes highly of Sir Wm. I do so want him to marry her. There is a Dow. Lady P. presiding there to make it all right. The Man is the same; but she does not mention

what he is by profession or trade. She does not think Lady P. was privy to his scheme on her, but, on being in his power, yielded. Oh, Sir Wm.! Sir Wm.! how I will love you if you will love Miss Sharpe!

Mrs. Driver, etc., are off by Collier, but so near being too late that she had not time to call and leave the keys herself. I have them, however. I suppose one is the key of the linen-press, but I do not know what to guess the other.

The coach was stopped at the blacksmith's, and they came running down with Triggs and Browning, and trunks, and birdcages. Quite amusing.

My mother desires her love, and hopes to hear from you.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

Frank and Mary are to have Mary Goodchild to help as *Under* till they can get a cook. She is delighted to go.

Best love at Streatham.

Miss Austen, Henrietta St.
By favor of Mr. Gray.

LVII.

23 Hans Place, Tuesday morning (August, 1814).

My dear Cassandra, — I had a very good journey, not crowded, two of the three taken up at Bentley being children, the others of a reasona-

ble size; and they were all very quiet and civil. We were late in London, from being a great load, and from changing coaches at Farnham; it was nearly four, I believe, when we reached Sloane Street. Henry himself met me, and as soon as my trunk and basket could be routed out from all the other trunks and baskets in the world, we were on our way to Hans Place in the luxury of a nice, large, cool, dirty hackney coach.

There were four in the kitchen part of Yalden, and I was told fifteen at top, among them Percy Benn. We met in the same room at Egham, but poor Percy was not in his usual spirits. He would be more chatty, I dare say, in his way from Woolwich. We took up a young Gibson at Holybourn, and, in short, everybody either did come up by Yalden yesterday, or wanted to come up. It put me in mind of my own coach between Edinburgh and Stirling.

Henry is very well, and has given me an account of the Canterbury races, which seem to have been as pleasant as one could wish. Everything went well. Fanny had good partners, Mr. —— was her second on Thursday, but he did not dance with her any more.

This will content you for the present. I must just add, however, that there were no Lady Charlottes, they were gone off to Kirby, and that Mary Oxenden, instead of dying, is going to marry Wm. Hammond.

No James and Edward yet. Our evening yesterday was perfectly quiet; we only talked a little to Mr. Tilson across the intermediate gardens; she was gone out airing with Miss Burdett. It is a delightful place, — more than answers my expectation. Having got rid of my unreasonable ideas, I find more space and comfort in the rooms than I had supposed, and the garden is quite a love. I am in the front attic, which is the bedchamber to be preferred.

Henry wants you to see it all, and asked whether you would return with him from Hampshire; I encouraged him to think you would. He breakfasts here early, and then rides to Henrietta St. If it continues fine, John is to drive me there by and by, and we shall take an airing together; and I do not mean to take any other exercise, for I feel a little tired after my long jumble. I live in his room downstairs; it is particularly pleasant from opening upon the garden. I go and refresh myself every now and then, and then come back to solitary coolness. There is one maidservant only, a very creditable, clean-looking young woman. Richard remains for the present.

Wednesday morning. — My brother and Edwd. arrived last night. They could not get places the day before. Their business is about teeth and wigs, and they are going after breakfast to Scarman's and Tavistock St., and they are to return

to go with me afterwards in the barouche. I hope to do some of my errands to-day.

I got the willow yesterday, as Henry was not quite ready when I reached Hena. St. I saw Mr. Hampson there for a moment. He dines here to-morrow, and proposed bringing his son; so I must submit to seeing George Hampson, though I had hoped to go through life without it. It was one of my vanities, like your not reading "Patronage."

After leaving H. St. we drove to Mrs. Latouche's; they are always at home, and they are to dine here on Friday. We could do no more, as it began to rain.

We dine at half-past four to-day, that our visitors may go to the play, and Henry and I are to spend the evening with the Tilsons, to meet Miss Burnett, who leaves town to-morrow. Mrs. T. called on me yesterday.

Is not this all that can have happened or been arranged? Not quite. Henry wants me to see more of his Hanwell favorite, and has written to invite her to spend a day or two here with me. His scheme is to fetch her on Saturday. I am more and more convinced that he will marry again soon, and like the idea of her better than of anybody else at hand.

Now I have breakfasted and have the room to myself again. It is likely to be a fine day. How do you all do?

Henry talks of being at Chawton about the 1st of Sept. He has once mentioned a scheme which I should rather like, — calling on the Birches and the Crutchleys in our way. It may never come to anything, but I must provide for the possibility by troubling you to send up my silk pelisse by Collier on Saturday. I feel it would be necessary on such an occasion; and be so good as to put up a clean dressing-gown which will come from the wash on Friday. You need not direct it to be left anywhere. It may take its chance.

We are to call for Henry between three and four, and I must finish this and carry it with me, as he is not always there in the morning before the parcel is made up. And before I set off, I must return Mrs. Tilson's visit. I hear nothing of the Hoblyns, and abstain from all inquiry.

I hope Mary Jane and Frank's gardens go on well. Give my love to them all — Nunna Hat's love to George. A great many people wanted to run up in the Poach as well as me. The wheat looked very well all the way, and James says the same of *his* road.

The same good account of Mrs. C.'s health continues, and her circumstances mend. She gets farther and farther from poverty. What a comfort! Good-by to you.

Yours very truly and affectionately,

JANE.

All well at Steventon. I hear nothing particular of Ben, except that Edward is to get him some pencils.

Miss Austen, Chawton.
By favor of Mr. Gray.

LVIII.

My dear Anna,[1] — I am very much obliged to you for sending your MS. It has entertained me extremely; indeed all of us. I read it aloud to your grandmamma and Aunt Cass, and we were all very much pleased. The spirit does not droop at all. Sir Thos., Lady Helen, and St. Julian are very well done, and Cecilia continues to be interesting in spite of her being so amiable. It was very fit you should advance her age. I like the beginning of Devereux Forester very much, a great deal better than if he had been very good or very bad. A few verbal corrections are all that I felt tempted to make; the principal of them is a speech of St. Julian to Lady Helen, which you see I have presumed to alter. As Lady H. is Cecilia's superior, it would not be correct to talk of her being introduced. It is Cecilia who must be introduced. And I do not like a lover speaking in the 3rd person; it is too much like the part of

[1] Miss Anna Austen, at this time engaged to Mr. Lefroy, was writing a novel which she sent to her aunt for criticism.

Lord Overtley, and I think it not natural. If you think differently, however, you need not mind me. I am impatient for more, and only wait for a safe conveyance to return this.

Yours affectionately,

J. A.

LIX.

August 10, 1814.

My dear Anna, — I am quite ashamed to find that I have never answered some question of yours in a former note. I kept it on purpose to refer to it at a proper time, and then forgot it. I like the name "Which is the Heroine" very well, and I dare say shall grow to like it very much in time; but "Enthusiasm" was something so very superior that my common title must appear to disadvantage. I am not sensible of any blunders about Dawlish; the library was pitiful and wretched twelve years ago, and not likely to have anybody's publications. There is no such title as Desborough, either among dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, or barons. These were your inquiries. I will now thank you for your envelope received this morning. Your Aunt Cass is as well pleased with St. Julian as ever, and I am delighted with the idea of seeing Progillian again.

Wednesday, 17. — We have now just finished the first of the three books I had the pleasure of re-

ceiving yesterday. I read it aloud, and we are all very much amused, and like the work quite as well as ever. I depend on getting through another book before dinner, but there is really a good deal of respectable reading in your forty-eight pages. I have no doubt six would make a very good-sized volume. You must have been quite pleased to have accomplished so much. I like Lord Portman and his brother very much. I am only afraid that Lord P.'s good nature will make most people like him better than he deserves. The whole family are very good; and Lady Anne, who was your great dread, you have succeeded particularly well with. Bell Griffin is just what she should be. My corrections have not been more important than before; here and there we have thought the sense could be expressed in fewer words, and I have scratched out Sir Thos. from walking with the others to the stables, etc. the very day after breaking his arm; for though I find your papa did walk out immediately after his arm was set, I think it can be so little usual as to appear unnatural in a book. Lynn will not do. Lynn is towards forty miles from Dawlish and would not be talked of there. I have put Starcross instead. If you prefer Easton, that must be always safe.

I have also scratched out the introduction between Lord Portman and his brother and Mr.

Griffin. A country surgeon (don't tell Mr. C. Lyford) would not be introduced to men of their rank; and when Mr. P. is first brought in, he would not be introduced as the Honorable. That distinction is never mentioned at such times; at least, I believe not. Now we have finished the second book, or rather the fifth. I do think you had better omit Lady Helena's postscript. To those that are acquainted with "Pride and Prejudice" it will seem an imitation. And your Aunt C. and I both recommend your making a little alteration in the last scene between Devereux F. and Lady Clanmurray and her daughter. We think they press him too much, more than sensible or well-bred women would do; Lady C., at least, should have discretion enough to be sooner satisfied with his determination of not going with them. I am very much pleased with Egerton as yet. I did not expect to like him, but I do, and Susan is a very nice little animated creature; but St. Julian is the delight of our lives. He is quite interesting. The whole of his break-off with Lady Helena is very well done. Yes; Russell Square is a very proper distance from Berkeley Square. We are reading the last book. They must be two days going from Dawlish to Bath. They are nearly one hundred miles apart.

Thursday. — We finished it last night after our return from drinking tea at the Great House.

The last chapter does not please us quite so well; we do not thoroughly like the play, perhaps from having had too much of plays in that way lately (*vide* "Mansfield Park"), and we think you had better not leave England. Let the Portmans go to Ireland; but as you know nothing of the manners there, you had better not go with them. You will be in danger of giving false representations. Stick to Bath and the Foresters. There you will be quite at home.

Your Aunt C. does not like desultory novels, and is rather afraid yours will be too much so, that there will be too frequently a change from one set of people to another, and that circumstances will be introduced of apparent consequence which will lead to nothing. It will not be so great an objection to me if it does. I allow much more latitude than she does, and think Nature and spirit cover many sins of a wandering story, and people in general do not care so much about it for your comfort.

I should like to have had more of Devereux. I do not feel enough acquainted with him. You were afraid of meddling with him, I dare say. I like your sketch of Lord Clanmurray, and your picture of the two young girls' enjoyment is very good. I have not noticed St. Julian's serious conversation with Cecilia, but I like it exceedingly. What he says about the madness

of otherwise sensible women on the subject of their daughters coming out is worth its weight in gold.

I do not perceive that the language sinks. Pray go on.

LX.

CHAWTON, Sept. 9.

MY DEAR ANNA, — We have been very much amused by your three books, but I have a good many criticisms to make, more than you will like. We are not satisfied with Mrs. Forester settling herself as tenant and near neighbor to such a man as Sir Thomas, without having some other inducement to go there. She ought to have some friend living thereabouts to tempt her. A woman going with two girls just growing up into a neighborhood where she knows nobody but one man of not very good character, is an awkwardness which so prudent a woman as Mrs. F. would not be likely to fall into. Remember she is very prudent. You must not let her act inconsistently. Give her a friend, and let that friend be invited by Sir Thomas H. to meet her, and we shall have no objection to her dining at the Priory as she does; but otherwise a woman in her situation would hardly go there before she had been visited by other families. I like the scene itself, the Miss Leslie, Lady Anne, and the music very much.

Leslie is a noble name. Sir Thomas H. you always do very well. I have only taken the liberty of expunging one phrase of his which would not be allowable, — "Bless my heart!" It is too familiar and inelegant. Your grandmother is more disturbed at Mrs. Forester's not returning the Egertons' visit sooner than by anything else. They ought to have called at the Parsonage before Sunday. You describe a sweet place, but your descriptions are often more minute than will be liked. You give too many particulars of right hand and left. Mrs. Forester is not careful enough of Susan's health. Susan ought not to be walking out so soon after heavy rains, taking long walks in the dirt. An anxious mother would not suffer it. I like your Susan very much; she is a sweet creature, her playfulness of fancy is very delightful. I like her as she is now exceedingly, but I am not quite so well satisfied with her behavior to George R. At first she seems all over attachment and feeling, and afterwards to have none at all; she is so extremely confused at the ball, and so well satisfied apparently with Mr. Morgan. She seems to have changed her character.

You are now collecting your people delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life. Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on, and I hope you will do a great deal more, and

make full use of them while they are so very favorably arranged.

You are but now coming to the heart and beauty of your story. Until the heroine grows up the fun must be imperfect, but I expect a great deal of entertainment from the next three or four books, and I hope you will not resent these remarks by sending me no more. We like the Egertons very well. We see no blue pantaloons or cocks or hens. There is nothing to enchant one certainly in Mr. L. L., but we make no objection to him, and his inclination to like Susan is pleasing. The sister is a good contrast, but the name of Rachel is as much as I can bear. They are not so much like the Papillons as I expected. Your last chapter is very entertaining, the conversation on genius, etc.; Mr. St. Julian and Susan both talk in character, and very well. In some former parts Cecilia is perhaps a little too solemn and good, but upon the whole her disposition is very well opposed to Susan's, her want of imagination is very natural. I wish you could make Mrs. Forester talk more; but she must be difficult to manage and make entertaining, because there is so much good sense and propriety about her that nothing can be made very broad. Her economy and her ambition must not be staring. The papers left by Mrs. Fisher are very good. Of course one guesses something. I

hope when you have written a great deal more, you will be equal to scratching out some of the past. The scene with Mrs. Mellish I should condemn; it is prosy and nothing to the purpose, and indeed the more you can find in your heart to curtail between Dawlish and Newton Priors, the better I think it will be, — one does not care for girls until they are grown up. Your Aunt C. quite understands the exquisiteness of that name, — Newton Priors is really a nonpareil. Milton would have given his eyes to have thought of it. Is not the cottage taken from Tollard Royal?

[Thus far the letter was written on the 9th, but before it was finished news arrived at Chawton of the death of Mrs. Charles Austen. She died in her confinement, and the baby died also. She left three little girls, — Cassie, Harriet, and Fanny. It was not until the 18th that Jane resumed her letter as follows :[1]]

Sunday. — I am very glad, dear Anna, that I wrote as I did before this sad event occurred. I have only to add that your grandmamma does not seem the worse now for the shock.

I shall be very happy to receive more of your work if more is ready; and you write so fast that I have great hopes Mr. Digweed will come back freighted with such a cargo as not all his hops or his sheep could equal the value of.

[1] Note by Lord Brabourne.

Your grandmamma desires me to say that she will have finished your shoes to-morrow, and thinks they will look very well. And that she depends upon seeing you, as you promise, before you quit the country, and hopes you will give her more than a day.

Yours affectionately. J. Austen.

LXI.

Chawton, Wednesday (Sept. 28).

My dear Anna, — I hope you do not depend on having your book again immediately. I kept it that your grandmamma may hear it, for it has not been possible yet to have any public reading. I have read it to your Aunt Cassandra, however, in our own room at night, while we undressed, and with a great deal of pleasure. We like the first chapter extremely, with only a little doubt whether Lady Helena is not almost too foolish. The matrimonial dialogue is very good certainly. I like Susan as well as ever, and begin now not to care at all about Cecilia; she may stay at Easton Court as long as she likes. Henry Mellish will be, I am afraid, too much in the common novel style, — a handsome, amiable, unexceptionable young man (such as do not much abound in real life), desperately in love and all in vain. But I have no business to judge him so early.

Jane Egerton is a very natural, comprehensible girl, and the whole of her acquaintance with Susan and Susan's letter to Cecilia are very pleasing and quite in character. But Miss Egerton does not entirely satisfy us. She is too formal and solemn, we think, in her advice to her brother not to fall in love; and it is hardly like a sensible woman, — it is putting it into his head. We should like a few hints from her better. We feel really obliged to you for introducing a Lady Kenrick; it will remove the greatest fault in the work, and I give you credit for considerable forbearance as an author in adopting so much of our opinion. I expect high fun about Mrs. Fisher and Sir Thomas. You have been perfectly right in telling Ben. Lefroy of your work, and I am very glad to hear how much he likes it. His encouragement and approbation must be "quite beyond everything."[1] I do not at all wonder at his not expecting to like anybody so well as Cecilia at first, but I shall be surprised if he does not become a Susanite in time. Devereux Forester's being ruined by his vanity is extremely good, but I wish you would not let him plunge into a "vortex of dissipation." I do not object to the thing, but I cannot bear the expression; it is such thorough novel slang, and so old that I

[1] A phrase always in the mouth of one of the Chawton neighbors, Mrs. H. Digweed.

dare say Adam met with it in the first novel he opened. Indeed, I did very much like to know Ben's opinion. I hope he will continue to be pleased with it, and I think he must, but I cannot flatter him with there being much incident. We have no great right to wonder at his not valuing the name of Progillian. That is a source of delight which even he can hardly be quite competent to.

Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. It is not fair. He has fame and profit enough as a poet, and should not be taking the bread out of the mouths of other people.

I do not like him, and do not mean to like "Waverley" if I can help it, but fear I must.

I am quite determined, however, not to be pleased with Mrs. West's "Alicia De Lacy," should I ever meet with it, which I hope I shall not. I think I can be stout against anything written by Mrs. West. I have made up my mind to like no novels really but Miss Edgeworth's, yours, and my own.

What can you do with Egerton to increase the interest for him? I wish you could contrive something, some family occurrence to bring out his good qualities more. Some distress among brothers and sisters to relieve by the sale of his curacy! Something to carry him mysteriously away; and then be heard of at York or Edinburgh in an old greatcoat. I would not seriously rec-

ommend anything improbable, but if you could invent something spirited for him, it would have a good effect. He might lend all his money to Captain Morris, but then he would be a great fool if he did. Cannot the Morrises quarrel and he reconcile them? Excuse the liberty I take in these suggestions.

Your Aunt Frank's nursemaid has just given her warning, but whether she is worth your having, or would take your place, I know not. She was Mrs. Webb's maid before she went to the Great House. She leaves your aunt because she cannot agree with the other servants. She is in love with the man, and her head seems rather turned. He returns her affection, but she fancies every one else is wanting him and envying her. Her previous service must have fitted her for such a place as yours, and she is very active and cleanly. The Webbs are really gone! When I saw the wagons at the door, and thought of all the trouble they must have in moving, I began to reproach myself for not having liked them better; but since the wagons have disappeared my conscience has been closed again, and I am excessively glad they are gone.

I am very fond of Sherlock's sermons, and prefer them to almost any.

Your affectionate aunt, J. Austen.

If you wish me to speak to the maid, let me know.

LXII.

To Miss Frances Austen.

CHAWTON, Friday (Nov. 18, 1814).

I FEEL quite as doubtful as you could be, my dearest Fanny, as to when my letter may be finished, for I can command very little quiet time at present; but yet I must begin, for I know you will be glad to hear as soon as possible, and I really am impatient myself to be writing something on so very interesting a subject, though I have no hope of writing anything to the purpose. I shall do very little more, I dare say, than say over again what you have said before.

I was certainly a good deal surprised at first, as I had no suspicion of any change in your feelings, and I have no scruple in saying that you cannot be in love. My dear Fanny, I am ready to laugh at the idea, and yet it is no laughing matter to have had you so mistaken as to your own feelings. And with all my heart I wish I had cautioned you on that point when first you spoke to me; but though I did not think you then much in love, I did consider you as being attached in a degree quite sufficiently for happiness, as I had no doubt it would increase with opportunity, and from the time of our being in London together I thought you really very much in love. But you certainly are not at all — there is no concealing it.

What strange creatures we are! It seems as if your being secure of him had made you indifferent. There was a little disgust, I suspect, at the races, and I do not wonder at it. His expressions then would not do for one who had rather more acuteness, penetration, and taste, than love, which was your case. And yet, after all, I am surprised that the change in your feelings should be so great. He is just what he ever was, only more evidently and uniformly devoted to you. This is all the difference. How shall we account for it?

My dearest Fanny, I am writing what will not be of the smallest use to you. I am feeling differently every moment, and shall not be able to suggest a single thing that can assist your mind. I could lament in one sentence and laugh in the next, but as to opinion or counsel I am sure that none will be extracted worth having from this letter.

I read yours through the very evening I received it, getting away by myself. I could not bear to leave off when I had once begun. I was full of curiosity and concern. Luckily your At. C. dined at the other house; therefore I had not to manœuvre away from her, and as to anybody else, I do not care.

Poor dear Mr. A.! Oh, dear Fanny! your mistake has been one that thousands of women fall into. He was the first young man who attached himself to you. That was the charm, and most

powerful it is. Among the multitudes, however, that make the same mistake with yourself, there can be few indeed who have so little reason to regret it; his character and his attachment leave you nothing to be ashamed of.

Upon the whole, what is to be done? You have no inclination for any other person. His situation in life, family, friends, and, above all, his character, his uncommonly amiable mind, strict principles, just notions, good habits, all that you know so well how to value, all that is really of the first importance, — everything of this nature pleads his cause most strongly. You have no doubt of his having superior abilities, he has proved it at the University; he is, I dare say, such a scholar as your agreeable, idle brothers would ill bear a comparison with.

Oh, my dear Fanny! the more I write about him the warmer my feelings become, — the more strongly I feel the sterling worth of such a young man, and the desirableness of your growing in love with him again. I recommend this most thoroughly. There are such beings in the world, perhaps one in a thousand, as the creature you and I should think perfection, where grace and spirit are united to worth, where the manners are equal to the heart and understanding; but such a person may not come in your way, or, if he does, he may not be the eldest son of a man of fortune, the near rela

tion of your particular friend, and belonging to your own county.

Think of all this, Fanny. Mr. A. has advantages which we do not often meet in one person. His only fault, indeed, seems modesty. If he were less modest, he would be more agreeable, speak louder, and look impudenter; and is not it a fine character of which modesty is the only defect? I have no doubt he will get more lively and more like yourselves as he is more with you; he will catch your ways if he belongs to you. And as to there being any objection from his goodness, from the danger of his becoming even evangelical, I cannot admit that. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be evangelicals, and am at least persuaded that they who are so from reason and feeling must be happiest and safest. Do not be frightened from the connection by your brothers having most wit, — wisdom is better than wit, and in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side; and don't be frightened by the idea of his acting more strictly up to the precepts of the New Testament than others.

And now, my dear Fanny, having written so much on one side of the question, I shall turn round and entreat you not to commit yourself farther, and not to think of accepting him unless you really do like him. Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without

affection; and if his deficiencies of manner, etc., etc., strike you more than all his good qualities, if you continue to think strongly of them, give him up at once. Things are now in such a state that you must resolve upon one or the other, — either to allow him to go on as he has done, or whenever you are together behave with a coldness which may convince him that he has been deceiving himself. I have no doubt of his suffering a good deal for a time, — a great deal when he feels that he must give you up; but it is no creed of mine, as you must be well aware, that such sort of disappointments kill anybody.

Your sending the music was an admirable device, it made everything easy, and I do not know how I could have accounted for the parcel otherwise; for though your dear papa most conscientiously hunted about till he found me alone in the dining-parlor, your Aunt C. had seen that he had a parcel to deliver. As it was, however, I do not think anything was suspected.

We have heard nothing fresh from Anna. I trust she is very comfortable in her new home. Her letters have been very sensible and satisfactory, with no parade of happiness, which I liked them the better for. I have often known young married women write in a way I did not like in that respect.

You will be glad to hear that the first edition

of M. P.[1] is all sold. Your Uncle Henry is rather wanting me to come to town to settle about a second edition; but as I could not very conveniently leave home now, I have written him my will and pleasure and unless he still urges it, shall not go. I am very greedy and want to make the most of it; but as you are much above caring about money, I shall not plague you with any particulars. The pleasures of vanity are more within your comprehension, and you will enter into mine at receiving the praise which every now and then comes to me through some channel or other.

Saturday. — Mr. Palmer spent yesterday with us, and is gone off with Cassy this morning. We have been expecting Miss Lloyd the last two days, and feel sure of her to-day. Mr. Knight and Mr. Edwd. Knight are to dine with us, and on Monday they are to dine with us again, accompanied by their respectable host and hostess.

Sunday. — Your papa had given me messages to you; but they are unnecessary, as he writes by this post to Aunt Louisa. We had a pleasant party yesterday; at least we found it so. It is delightful to see him so cheerful and confident. Aunt Cass. and I dine at the Great House to-day. We shall be a snug half-dozen. Miss Lloyd came, as we expected, yesterday, and desires her love. She is very happy to hear of your learning the harp. I

[1] "Mansfield Park."

do not mean to send you what I owe Miss Hare, because I think you would rather not be paid beforehand.

Yours very affectionately,

JANE AUSTEN.

Miss KNIGHT,
Goodnestone Farm, Wingham, Kent.

LXIII

CHAWTON, Nov. 21, 1814.

MY DEAR ANNA, — I met Harriet Benn yesterday. She gave me her congratulations, and desired they might be forwarded to you, and there they are. The chief news from this country is the death of old Mrs. Dormer. Mrs. Clement walks about in a new black velvet pelisse lined with yellow, and a white bobbin net veil, and looks remarkably well in them.

I think I understand the country about Hendon from your description. It must be very pretty in summer. Should you know from the atmosphere that you were within a dozen miles of London? Make everybody at Hendon admire "Mansfield Park."

Your affectionate aunt, J. A.

LXIV.

Hans Place, Nov. 28, 1814.

My dear Anna, — I assure you we all came away very much pleased with our visit. We talked of you for about a mile and a half with great satisfaction; and I have been just sending a very good report of you to Miss Benn, with a full account of your dress for Susan and Maria.

We were all at the play last night to see Miss O'Neil in "Isabella." I do not think she was quite equal to my expectations. I fancy I want something more than can be. I took two pocket-handkerchiefs, but had very little occasion for either. She is an elegant creature, however, and hugs Mr. Young delightfully. I am going this morning to see the little girls in Keppel Street. Cassy was excessively interested about your marriage when she heard of it, which was not until she was to drink your health on the wedding-day.

She asked a thousand questions in her usual manner, what he said to you and what you said to him. If your uncle were at home he would send his best love, but I will not impose any base fictitious remembrances on you; mine I can honestly give, and remain

Your affectionate aunt,

J. Austen.

LXV.

Hans Place, Wednesday.

My dear Anna, — I have been very far from finding your book an evil, I assure you. I read it immediately and with great pleasure. I think you are going on very well. The description of Dr. Griffin and Lady Helena's unhappiness is very good, and just what was likely to be. I am curious to know what the end of them will be. The name of Newton Priors is really invaluable; I never met with anything superior to it. It is delightful, and one could live on the name of Newton Priors for a twelvemonth. Indeed, I think you get on very fast. I only wish other people of my acquaintance could compose as rapidly. I am pleased with the dog scene and with the whole of George and Susan's love, but am more particularly struck with your serious conversations. They are very good throughout. St. Julian's history was quite a surprise to me. You had not very long known it yourself, I suspect; but I have no objection to make to the circumstance, and it is very well told. His having been in love with the aunt gives Cecilia an additional interest with him. I like the idea, — a very proper compliment to an aunt! I rather imagine indeed that nieces are seldom chosen but out of compliment to some

aunt or another. I dare say Ben was in love with me once, and would never have thought of you if he had not supposed me dead of scarlet fever. Yes, I was in a mistake as to the number of books. I thought I had read three before the three at Chawton, but fewer than six will not do. I want to see dear Bell Griffin again; and had you not better give some hint of St. Julian's early history in the beginning of the story?

We shall see nothing of Streatham while we are in town, as Mrs. Hill is to lie in of a daughter. Mrs. Blackstone is to be with her. Mrs. Heathcote and Miss Bigg[1] are just leaving. The latter writes me word that Miss Blackford is married, but I have never seen it in the papers, and one may as well be single if the wedding is not to be in print.

Your affectionate aunt, J. A.

LXVI.

23 Hans Place, Wednesday (Nov. 30, 1814).

I am very much obliged to you, my dear Fanny, for your letter, and I hope you will write again soon, that I may know you to be all safe and happy at home.

Our visit to Hendon will interest you, I am sure; but I need not enter into the particulars of it, as

[1] Sisters to Mrs. Hall.

your papa will be able to answer almost every question. I certainly could describe her bedroom and her drawers and her closet better than he can, but I do not feel that I can stop to do it. I was rather sorry to hear that she is to have an instrument; it seems throwing money away. They will wish the twenty-four guineas in the shape of sheets and towels six months hence; and as to her playing, it never can be anything.

Her purple pelisse rather surprised me. I thought we had known all paraphernalia of that sort. I do not mean to blame her; it looked very well, and I dare say she wanted it. I suspect nothing worse than its being got in secret, and not owned to anybody. I received a very kind note from her yesterday, to ask me to come again and stay a night with them. I cannot do it, but I was pleased to find that she had the power of doing so right a thing. My going was to give them both pleasure very properly.

I just saw Mr. Hayter at the play, and think his face would please me on acquaintance. I was sorry he did not dine here. It seemed rather odd to me to be in the theatre with nobody to watch for. I was quite composed myself, at leisure for all the agitated Isabella could raise.

Now, my dearest Fanny, I will begin a subject which comes in very naturally. You frighten me out of my wits by your reference. Your affection

gives me the highest pleasure, but indeed you must not let anything depend on my opinion; your own feelings, and none but your own, should determine such an important point. So far, however, as answering your question, I have no scruple. I am perfectly convinced that your present feelings, supposing you were to marry now, would be sufficient for his happiness; but when I think how very, very far it is from a "now," and take everything that may be into consideration, I dare not say, "Determine to accept him;" the risk is too great for you, unless your own sentiments prompt it.

You will think me perverse, perhaps; in my last letter I was urging everything in his favor, and now I am inclining the other way, but I cannot help it; I am at present more impressed with the possible evil that may arise to you from engaging yourself to him — in word or mind — than with anything else. When I consider how few young men you have yet seen much of, how capable you are (yes, I do still think you very capable) of being really in love, and how full of temptation the next six or seven years of your life will probably be (it is the very period of life for the strongest attachments to be formed), — I cannot wish you, with your present very cool feelings, to devote yourself in honor to him. It is very true that you never may attach another man his equal altogether; but if that other man has the power of

attaching you more, he will be in your eyes the most perfect.

I shall be glad if you can revive past feelings, and from your unbiassed self resolve to go on as you have done, but this I do not expect; and without it I cannot wish you to be fettered. I should not be afraid of your marrying him; with all his worth you would soon love him enough for the happiness of both; but I should dread the continuance of this sort of tacit engagement, with such an uncertainty as there is of when it may be completed. Years may pass before he is independent; you like him well enough to marry, but not well enough to wait; the unpleasantness of appearing fickle is certainly great; but if you think you want punishment for past illusions, there it is, and nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound without love, — bound to one, and preferring another; that is a punishment which you do not deserve.

I know you did not meet, or rather will not meet, to-day, as he called here yesterday; and I am glad of it. It does not seem very likely, at least, that he should be in time for a dinner visit sixty miles off. We did not see him, only found his card when we came home at four. Your Uncle H. merely observed that he was a day after "the fair." We asked your brother on Monday (when Mr. Hayter was talked of) why he did not

invite him too; saying, "I know he is in town, for I met him the other day in Bond St." Edward answered that he did not know where he was to be found. "Don't you know his chambers?" "No."

I shall be most glad to hear from you again, my dearest Fanny, but it must not be later than Saturday, as we shall be off on Monday long before the letters are delivered; and write something that may do to be read or told. I am to take the Miss Moores back on Saturday, and when I return I shall hope to find your pleasant little flowing scrawl on the table. It will be a relief to me after playing at ma'ams, for though I like Miss H. M. as much as one can at my time of life after a day's acquaintance, it is uphill work to be talking to those whom one knows so little.

Only one comes back with me to-morrow, probably Miss Eliza, and I rather dread it. We shall not have two ideas in common. She is young, pretty, chattering, and thinking chiefly, I presume, of dress, company, and admiration. Mr. Sanford is to join us at dinner, which will be a comfort, and in the evening, while your uncle and Miss Eliza play chess, he shall tell me comical things and I will laugh at them, which will be a pleasure to both.

I called in Keppel Street and saw them all, including dear Uncle Charles, who is to come and

dine with us quietly to-day. Little Harriot sat in my lap, and seemed as gentle and affectionate as ever, and as pretty, except not being quite well. Fanny is a fine stout girl, talking incessantly, with an interesting degree of lisp and indistinctness, and very likely may be the handsomest in time. Cassy did not show more pleasure in seeing me than her sisters, but I expected no better. She does not shine in the tender feelings. She will never be a Miss O'Neil, more in the Mrs. Siddons line.

Thank you, but it is not settled yet whether I do hazard a second edition. We are to see Egerton to-day, when it will probably be determined. People are more ready to borrow and praise than to buy, which I cannot wonder at; but though I like praise as well as anybody, I like what Edward calls "Pewter" too. I hope he continues careful of his eyes, and finds the good effect of it. I cannot suppose we differ in our ideas of the Christian religion. You have given an excellent description of it. We only affix a different meaning to the word *evangelical*.

Yours most affectionately,

J. Austen.

Miss Knight,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LXVII.

Chawton, Friday (Sept. 29).

My dear Anna, — We told Mr. B. Lefroy that if the weather did not prevent us we should certainly come and see you to-morrow and bring Cassy, trusting to your being good enough to give her a dinner about one o'clock, that we might be able to be with you the earlier and stay the longer. But on giving Cassy her choice between the Fair at Alton or Wyards, it must be confessed that she has preferred the former, which we trust will not greatly affront you; if it does, you may hope that some little Anne hereafter may revenge the insult by a similar preference of an Alton Fair to her Cousin Cassy. In the mean while we have determined to put off our visit to you until Monday, which we hope will be not less convenient. I wish the weather may not resolve on another put off. I must come to you before Wednesday if it be possible, for on that day I am going to London for a week or two with your Uncle Henry, who is expected here on Sunday. If Monday should appear too dirty for walking, and Mr. Lefroy would be so kind as to come and fetch me, I should be much obliged to him. Cassy might be of the party, and your Aunt Cassandra will take another opportunity.

Yours very affectionately, my dear Anna,

J. Austen.

Note by Lord Brabourne.

But before the week or two to which she had limited her visit in Hans Place was at an end, her brother fell ill, and on October 22 he was in such danger that she wrote to Steventon to summon her father to town. The letter was two days on the road, and reached him on Sunday the 24th. Even then he did not start immediately. In the evening he and his wife rode to Chawton, and it was not until the next day that he and Cassandra arrived in Hans Place. The malady from which Henry Austen was suffering was low fever, and he was for some days at death's door: but he rallied soon after his brother and sisters arrived, and recovered so quickly that the former was able to leave him at the end of the week. The great anxiety and fatigue which Jane underwent at this time was supposed by some of her family to have broken down her health. She was in a very feeble and exhausted condition when the bank in which her brother Henry was a partner broke, and he not only lost all that he possessed, but most of his relations suffered severely also. Jane was well enough to pay several visits with her sister in the summer of 1816, including one to Steventon, — the last she ever paid to that home of her childhood. The last note which Mrs. Lefroy had preserved is dated, —

LXVIII.

June 23, 1816.

My dear Anna, — Cassy desires her best thanks for the book. She was quite delighted to see it. I do not know when I have seen her so much struck by anybody's kindness as on this occasion. Her sensibility seems to be opening to the perception of great actions. These gloves having appeared on the pianoforte ever since you were here on Friday, we imagine they must be yours. Mrs. Digweed returned yesterday through all the afternoon's rain, and was of course wet through; but in speaking of it she never once said "it was beyond everything," which I am sure it must have been. Your mamma means to ride to Speen Hill to-morrow to see the Mrs. Hulberts, who are both very indifferent. By all accounts they really are breaking now, — not so stout as the old jackass.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

Chawton, Sunday, June 23.

Uncle Charles's birthday.

LXIX.

Hans Place, Friday (Nov. 24, 1815).

My dearest Cassandra, — I have the pleasure of sending you a much better account of my affairs, which I know will be a great delight to you.

I wrote to Mr. Murray yesterday myself, and Henry wrote at the same time to Roworth. Before the notes were out of the house, I received three sheets and an apology from R. We sent the notes, however, and I had a most civil one in reply from Mr. M. He is so very polite, indeed, that it is quite overcoming. The printers have been waiting for paper, — the blame is thrown upon the stationer; but he gives his word that I shall have no further cause for dissatisfaction. He has lent us Miss Williams and Scott, and says that any book of his will always be at my service. In short, I am soothed and complimented into tolerable comfort.

We had a visit yesterday from Edwd. Knight, and Mr. Mascall joined him here; and this morning has brought Mr. Mascall's compliments and two pheasants. We have some hope of Edward's coming to dinner to-day; he will, if he can, I believe. He is looking extremely well.

To-morrow Mr. Haden is to dine with us. There is happiness! We really grow so fond of Mr. Haden that I do not know what to expect. He and Mr. Tilson and Mr. Philips made up our circle of wits last night. Fanny played, and he sat and listened and suggested improvements, till Richard came in to tell him that "the doctor was waiting for him at Captn. Blake's;" and then he was off with a speed that you can imagine. He never

does appear in the least above his profession or out of humor with it, or I should think poor Captn. Blake, whoever he is, in a very bad way.

I must have misunderstood Henry when I told you that you were to hear from him to-day. He read me what he wrote to Edward: part of it must have amused him, I am sure one part, alas! cannot be very amusing to anybody. I wonder that with such business to worry him he can be getting better; but he certainly does gain strength, and if you and Edwd. were to see him now, I feel sure that you would think him improved since Monday.

He was out yesterday; it was a fine sunshiny day here (in the country perhaps you might have clouds and fogs. Dare I say so? I shall not deceive you, if I do, as to my estimation of the climate of London), and he ventured first on the balcony and then as far as the greenhouse. He caught no cold, and therefore has done more to-day, with great delight and self-persuasion of improvement.

He has been to see Mrs. Tilson and the Malings. By the by, you may talk to Mr. T. of his wife's being better; I saw her yesterday, and was sensible of her having gained ground in the last two days.

Evening. — We have had no Edward. Our circle is formed, — only Mr. Tilson and Mr.

Haden. We are not so happy as we were. A message came this afternoon from Mrs. Latouche and Miss East, offering themselves to drink tea with us to-morrow, and, as it was accepted, here is an end of our extreme felicity in our dinner guest. I am heartily sorry they are coming; it will be an evening spoilt to Fanny and me.

Another little disappointment: Mr. H. advises Henry's not venturing with us in the carriage to-morrow; if it were spring, he says, it would be a different thing. One would rather this had not been. He seems to think his going out to-day rather imprudent, though acknowledging at the same time that he is better than he was in the morning.

Fanny has had a letter full of commissions from Goodnestone; we shall be busy about them and her own matters, I dare say, from twelve to four. Nothing, I trust, will keep us from Keppel Street.

This day has brought a most friendly letter from Mr. Fowle, with a brace of pheasants. I did not know before that Henry had written to him a few days ago to ask for them. We shall live upon pheasants, — no bad life!

I send you five one-pound notes, for fear you should be distressed for little money. Lizzy's work is charmingly done; shall you put it to your chintz? A sheet came in this moment; 1st and 3rd vols. are now at 144; 2nd at 48. I am sure

you will like particulars. We are not to have the trouble of returning the sheets to Mr. Murray any longer; the printer's boys bring and carry.

I hope Mary continues to get well fast, and I send my love to little Herbert. You will tell me more of Martha's plans, of course, when you write again. Remember me most kindly to everybody, and Miss Benn besides.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

I have been listening to dreadful insanity. It is Mr. Haden's firm belief that a person not musical is fit for every sort of wickedness. I ventured to assert a little on the other side, but wished the cause in abler hands.

Miss Austen, Chawton.

LXX.

Hans Place, Sunday (Nov. 26).

My dearest, — The parcel arrived safely, and I am much obliged to you for your trouble. It cost 2*s.* 10*d.*, but as there is a certain saving of 2*s.* 4½*d.* on the other side, I am sure it is well worth doing. I send four pair of silk stockings, but I do not want them washed at present. In the three neckhandkerchiefs I include the one sent down before. These things, perhaps, Edwd. may be able to bring, but even if he is not, I am ex-

tremely pleased with his returning to you from Steventon. It is much better, far preferable.

I did mention the P. R. in my note to Mr. Murray; it brought me a fine compliment in return. Whether it has done any other good I do not know, but Henry thought it worth trying.

The printers continue to supply me very well. I am advanced in Vol. III. to my *arra*-root, upon which peculiar style of spelling there is a modest query in the margin. I will not forget Anna's arrowroot. I hope you have told Martha of my first resolution of letting nobody know that I might dedicate, etc., for fear of being obliged to do it, and that she is thoroughly convinced of my being influenced now by nothing but the most mercenary motives. I have paid nine shillings on her account to Miss Palmer; there was no more owing.

Well, we were very busy all yesterday; from half-past eleven till four in the streets, working almost entirely for other people, driving from place to place after a parcel for Sandling, which we could never find, and encountering the miseries of Grafton House to get a purple frock for Eleanor Bridges. We got to Keppel St., however, which was all I cared for; and though we could stay only a quarter of an hour, Fanny's calling gave great pleasure, and her sensibility still greater, for she was very much affected at the sight of the chil-

dren. Poor little F. looked heavy. We saw the whole party.

Aunt Harriet hopes Cassy will not forget to make a pincushion for Mrs. Kelly, as she has spoken of its being promised her several times. I hope we shall see Aunt H. and the dear little girls here on Thursday.

So much for the morning. Then came the dinner and Mr. Haden, who brought good manners and clever conversation. From seven to eight the harp; at eight Mrs. L. and Miss E. arrived, and for the rest of the evening the drawing-room was thus arranged: on the sofa side the two ladies, Henry, and myself making the best of it; on the opposite side Fanny and Mr. Haden, in two chairs (I believe, at least, they had two chairs), talking together uninterruptedly. Fancy the scene! And what is to be fancied next? Why, that Mr. H. dines here again to-morrow. To-day we are to have Mr. Barlow. Mr. H. is reading "Mansfield Park" for the first time, and prefers it to P. and P.

A hare and four rabbits from Gm. yesterday, so that we are stocked for nearly a week. Poor Farmer Andrews! I am very sorry for him, and sincerely wish his recovery.

A better account of the sugar than I could have expected. I should like to help you break some more. I am glad you cannot wake early; I am sure you must have been under great arrears of rest.

Fanny and I have been to B. Chapel, and walked back with Maria Cuthbert. We have been very little plagued with visitors this last week. I remember only Miss Herries, the aunt, but I am in terror for to-day, a fine bright Sunday; plenty of mortar, and nothing to do.

Henry gets out in his garden every day, but at present his inclination for doing more seems over, nor has he now any plan for leaving London before Dec. 18, when he thinks of going to Oxford for a few days; to-day, indeed, his feelings are for continuing where he is through the next two months.

One knows the uncertainty of all this; but should it be so, we must think the best, and hope the best, and do the best; and my idea in that case is, that when he goes to Oxford I should go home, and have nearly a week of you before you take my place. This is only a silent project, you know, to be gladly given up if better things occur. Henry calls himself stronger every day, and Mr. H. keeps on approving his pulse, which seems generally better than ever, but still they will not let him be well. Perhaps when Fanny is gone he will be allowed to recover faster.

I am not disappointed: I never thought the little girl at Wyards very pretty, but she will have a fine complexion and curly hair, and pass for a beauty. We are glad the mamma's cold has

not been worse, and send her our love and good wishes by every convenient opportunity. Sweet, amiable Frank! why does he have a cold too? Like Captain Mirvan to Mr. Duval,[1] "I wish it well over with him."

Fanny has heard all that I have said to you about herself and Mr. H. Thank you very much for the sight of dearest Charles's letter to yourself. How pleasantly and how naturally he writes! and how perfect a picture of his disposition and feelings his style conveys! Poor dear fellow! Not a present!

I have a great mind to send him all the twelve copies which were to have been dispersed among my near connections, beginning with the P. R.[2] and ending with Countess Morley. Adieu.

Yours affectionately,

J. Austen.

Give my love to Cassy and Mary Jane. Caroline will be gone when this reaches you.

Miss Austen.

LXXI.

Hans Place, Saturday (Dec. 2).

My dear Cassandra, — Henry came back yesterday, and might have returned the day before

[1] Characters in Miss Burney's "Evelina."

[2] Prince Regent.

if he had known as much in time. I had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. T. on Wednesday night that Mr. Seymour thought there was not the least occasion for his absenting himself any longer.

I had also the comfort of a few lines on Wednesday morning from Henry himself, just after your letter was gone, giving so good an account of his feelings as made me perfectly easy. He met with the utmost care and attention at Hanwell, spent his two days there very quietly and pleasantly, and being certainly in no respect the worse for going, we may believe that he must be better, as he is quite sure of being himself. To make his return a complete gala, Mr. Haden was secured for dinner. I need not say that our evening was agreeable.

But you seem to be under a mistake as to Mr. H. You call him an apothecary. He is no apothecary; he has never been an apothecary; there is not an apothecary in this neighborhood, — the only inconvenience of the situation, perhaps, — but so it is; we have not a medical man within reach. He is a Haden, nothing but a Haden, a sort of wonderful nondescript creature on two legs, something between a man and an angel, but without the least spice of an apothecary. He is, perhaps, the only person not an apothecary hereabouts. He has never sung to us. He will not sing without a pianoforte accompaniment.

Mr. Meyers gives his three lessons a week, al-

tering his days and his hours, however, just as he chooses, never very punctual, and never giving good measure. I have not Fanny's fondness for masters, and Mr. Meyers does not give me any longing after them. The truth is, I think, that they are all, at least music-masters, made of too much consequence, and allowed to take too many liberties with their scholars' time.

We shall be delighted to see Edward on Monday, only sorry that you must be losing him. A turkey will be equally welcome with himself. He must prepare for his own proper bedchamber here, as Henry moved down to the one below last week; he found the other cold.

I am sorry my mother has been suffering, and am afraid this exquisite weather is too good to agree with her. I enjoy it all over me, from top to toe, from right to left, longitudinally, perpendicularly, diagonally; and I cannot but selfishly hope we are to have it last till Christmas, — nice, unwholesome, unseasonable, relaxing, close, muggy weather.

Oh, thank you very much for your long letter; it did me a great deal of good. Henry accepts your offer of making his nine gallon of mead thankfully. The mistake of the dogs rather vexed him for a moment, but he has not thought of it since. To-day he makes a third attempt at his strengthening plaister, and as I am sure he will

now be getting out a great deal, it is to be wished that he may be able to keep it on. He sets off this morning by the Chelsea coach to sign bonds and visit Henrietta St., and I have no doubt will be going every day to Henrietta St.

Fanny and I were very snug by ourselves as soon as we were satisfied about our invalid's being safe at Hanwell. By manœuvring and good luck we foiled all the Malings' attempts upon us. Happily I caught a little cold on Wednesday, the morning we were in town, which we made very useful, and we saw nobody but our precious[1] and Mr. Tilson.

This evening the Malings are allowed to drink tea with us. We are in hopes — that is, we wish — Miss Palmer and the little girls may come this morning. You know, of course, that she could not come on Thursday, and she will not attempt to name any other day.

God bless you. Excuse the shortness of this, but I must finish it now, that I may save you *2d.* Best love.

Yours affectionately, J. A.

It strikes me that I have no business to give the P. R. a binding, but we will take counsel upon the question.

I am glad you have put the flounce on your

[1] Probably a playful allusion to Mr. Haden.

chintz; I am sure it must look particularly well, and it is what I had thought of.

Miss Austen,
Chawton, Alton, Hants.

LXXII.

Chawton (Feb. 20, 1816).

My dearest Fanny, — You are inimitable, irresistible. You are the delight of my life. Such letters, such entertaining letters, as you have lately sent! such a description of your queer little heart! such a lovely display of what imagination does! You are worth your weight in gold, or even in the new silver coinage. I cannot express to you what I have felt in reading your history of yourself, — how full of pity and concern, and admiration and amusement I have been! You are the paragon of all that is silly and sensible, commonplace and eccentric, sad and lively, provoking and interesting. Who can keep pace with the fluctuations of your fancy, the capprizios of your taste, the contradictions of your feelings? You are so odd, and all the time so perfectly natural! — so peculiar in yourself, and yet so like everybody else!

It is very, very gratifying to me to know you so intimately. You can hardly think what a pleasure it is to me to have such thorough pictures of

your heart. Oh, what a loss it will be when you are married! You are too agreeable in your single state, — too agreeable as a niece. I shall hate you when your delicious play of mind is all settled down into conjugal and maternal affections.

Mr. B—— frightens me. He will have you. I see you at the altar. I have some faith in Mrs. C. Cage's observation, and still more in Lizzy's; and besides, I know it must be so. He must be wishing to attach you. It would be too stupid and too shameful in him to be otherwise; and all the family are seeking your acquaintance.

Do not imagine that I have any real objection; I have rather taken a fancy to him than not, and I like the house for you. I only do not like you should marry anybody. And yet I do wish you to marry very much, because I know you will never be happy till you are; but the loss of a Fanny Knight will be never made up to me. My "affec. niece F. C. B——" will be but a poor substitute. I do not like your being nervous, and so apt to cry, — it is a sign you are not quite well; but I hope Mr. Scud — as you always write his name (your Mr. Scuds amuse me very much) — will do you good.

What a comfort that Cassandra should be so recovered! It was more than we had expected. I can easily believe she was very patient and very good. I always loved Cassandra for her fine dark

eyes and sweet temper. I am almost entirely cured of my rheumatism, — just a little pain in my knee now and then, to make me remember what it was, and keep on flannel. Aunt Cassandra nursed me so beautifully.

I enjoy your visit to Goodnestone, it must be a great pleasure to you; you have not seen Fanny Cage in comfort so long. I hope she represents and remonstrates and reasons with you properly. Why should you be living in dread of his marrying somebody else? (Yet how natural!) You did not choose to have him yourself, why not allow him to take comfort where he can? In your conscience you know that he could not bear a companion with a more animated character. You cannot forget how you felt under the idea of its having been possible that he might have dined in Hans Place.

My dearest Fanny, I cannot bear you should be unhappy about him. Think of his principles; think of his father's objection, of want of money, etc., etc. But I am doing no good; no, all that I urge against him will rather make you take his part more, — sweet, perverse Fanny.

And now I will tell you that we like your Henry to the utmost, to the very top of the glass, quite brimful. He is a very pleasing young man. I do not see how he could be mended. He does really bid fair to be everything his father and sister

could wish; and William I love very much indeed, and so we do all; he is quite our own William. In short, we are very comfortable together; that is, we can answer for ourselves.

Mrs. Deedes is as welcome as May to all our benevolence to her son; we only lamented that we could not do more, and that the 50*l.* note we slipped into his hand at parting was necessarily the limit of our offering. Good Mrs. Deedes! Scandal and gossip; yes, I dare say you are well stocked, but I am very fond of Mrs. —— for reasons good. Thank you for mentioning her praise of "Emma," etc.

I have contributed the marking to Uncle H.'s shirts, and now they are a complete memorial of the tender regard of many.

Friday. — I had no idea when I began this yesterday of sending it before your brother went back, but I have written away my foolish thoughts at such a rate that I will not keep them many hours longer to stare me in the face.

Much obliged for the quadrilles, which I am grown to think pretty enough, though of course they are very inferior to the cotillons of my own day.

Ben and Anna walked here last Sunday to hear Uncle Henry, and she looked so pretty, it was quite a pleasure to see her, so young and so blooming and so innocent, as if she had never had a wicked

thought in her life, which yet one has some reason to suppose she must have had, if we believe the doctrine of original sin. I hope Lizzy will have her play very kindly arranged for her. Henry is generally thought very good-looking, but not so handsome as Edward. I think I prefer his face. Wm. is in excellent looks, has a fine appetite, and seems perfectly well. You will have a great break up at Godmersham in the spring. You must feel their all going. It is very right, however! Poor Miss C.! I shall pity her when she begins to understand herself.

Your objection to the quadrilles delighted me exceedingly. Pretty well, for a lady irrecoverably attached to one person! Sweet Fanny, believe no such thing of yourself, spread no such malicious slander upon your understanding within the precincts of your imagination. Do not speak ill of your sense merely for the gratification of your fancy; yours is sense which deserves more honorable treatment. You are not in love with him; you never have been really in love with him.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

Miss Knight,
Godmersham Park, Faversham, Kent.

LXXIII.

CHAWTON, Thursday (March 13).

As to making any adequate return for such a letter as yours, my dearest Fanny, it is absolutely impossible. If I were to labor at it all the rest of my life, and live to the age of Methuselah, I could never accomplish anything so long and so perfect; but I cannot let William go without a few lines of acknowledgment and reply.

I have pretty well done with Mr. ——. By your description, he cannot be in love with you, however he may try at it; and I could not wish the match unless there were a great deal of love on his side. I do not know what to do about Jemima Branfill. What does her dancing away with so much spirit mean? That she does not care for him, or only wishes to appear not to care for him? Who can understand a young lady?

Poor Mrs. C. Milles, that she should die on the wrong day at last, after being about it so long! It was unlucky that the Goodnestone party could not meet you; and I hope her friendly, obliging, social spirit, which delighted in drawing people together, was not conscious of the division and disappointment she was occasioning. I am sorry and surprised that you speak of her as having little to leave, and must feel for Miss Milles, though she

is Molly, if a material loss of income is to attend her other loss. Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favor of matrimony; but I need not dwell on such arguments with you, pretty dear.

To you I shall say, as I have often said before, Do not be in a hurry, the right man will come at last; you will in the course of the next two or three years meet with somebody more generally unexceptionable than any one you have yet known, who will love you as warmly as possible, and who will so completely attract you that you will feel you never really loved before.

Do none of the A.'s ever come to balls now? You have never mentioned them as being at any. And what do you hear of the Gipps, or of Fanny and her husband?

Aunt Cassandra walked to Wyards yesterday with Mrs. Digweed. Anna has had a bad cold, and looks pale. She has just weaned Julia.

I have also heard lately from your Aunt Harriot, and cannot understand their plans in parting with Miss S., whom she seems very much to value now that Harriot and Eleanor are both of an age for a governess to be so useful to, especially as, when Caroline was sent to school some years, Miss Bell was still retained, though the others even then were nursery children. They have some good reason, I dare say, though I cannot penetrate

it; and till I know what it is I shall invent a bad one, and amuse myself with accounting for the difference of measures by supposing Miss S. to be a superior sort of woman, who has never stooped to recommend herself to the master of the family by flattery, as Miss Bell did.

I will answer your kind questions more than you expect. "Miss Catherine" is put upon the shelf for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out; but I have a something ready for publication, which may, perhaps, appear about a twelvemonth hence. It is short, — about the length of "Catherine." This is for yourself alone. Neither Mr. Salusbury nor Mr. Wildman is to know of it.

I am got tolerably well again, quite equal to walking about and enjoying the air, and by sitting down and resting a good while between my walks I get exercise enough. I have a scheme, however, for accomplishing more, as the weather grows spring-like. I mean to take to riding the donkey; it will be more independent and less troublesome than the use of the carriage, and I shall be able to go about with Aunt Cassandra in her walks to Alton and Wyards.

I hope you will think Wm. looking well; he was bilious the other day, and At. Cass. supplied him with a dose at his own request. I am sure you would have approved it. Wm. and I are the

best of friends. I love him very much. Everything is so natural about him, — his affections, his manners, and his drollery. He entertains and interests us extremely.

Mat. Hammond and A. M. Shaw are people whom I cannot care for in themselves, but I enter into their situation, and am glad they are so happy. If I were the Duchess of Richmond, I should be very miserable about my son's choice.

Our fears increase for poor little Harriot; the latest account is that Sir Ev. Home is confirmed in his opinion of there being water on the brain. I hope Heaven, in its mercy, will take her soon. Her poor father will be quite worn out by his feelings for her; he cannot spare Cassy at present, she is an occupation and a comfort to him.

LXXIV.

Chawton, Sunday (March 23).

I am very much obliged to you, my dearest Fanny, for sending me Mr. W.'s conversation; I had great amusement in reading it, and I hope I am not affronted, and do not think the worse of him for having a brain so very different from mine; but my strongest sensation of all is astonishment at your being able to press him on the subject so perseveringly; and I agree with your

papa that it was not fair. When he knows the truth, he will be uncomfortable.

You are the oddest creature! Nervous enough in some respects, but in others perfectly without nerves! Quite unrepulsable, hardened, and impudent. Do not oblige him to read any more. Have mercy on him, tell him the truth, and make him an apology. He and I should not in the least agree, of course, in our ideas of novels and heroines. Pictures of perfection, as you know, make me sick and wicked; but there is some very good sense in what he says, and I particularly respect him for wishing to think well of all young ladies; it shows an amiable and a delicate mind. And he deserves better treatment than to be obliged to read any more of my works.

Do not be surprised at finding Uncle Henry acquainted with my having another ready for publication. I could not say No when he asked me, but he knows nothing more of it. You will not like it, so you need not be impatient. You may perhaps like the heroine, as she is almost too good for me.

Many thanks for your kind care for my health; I certainly have not been well for many weeks, and about a week ago I was very poorly. I have had a good deal of fever at times, and indifferent nights; but I am considerably better now, and am recovering my looks a little, which have been bad

enough, — black and white, and every wrong color. I must not depend upon being ever very blooming again. Sickness is a dangerous indulgence at my time of life. Thank you for everything you tell me. I do not feel worthy of it by anything that I can say in return, but I assure you my pleasure in your letters is quite as great as ever, and I am interested and amused just as you could wish me. If there is a Miss *Marsden,* I perceive whom she will marry.

Evening. — I was languid and dull and very bad company when I wrote the above; I am better now, to my own feelings at least, and wish I may be more agreeable. We are going to have rain, and after that very pleasant genial weather, which will exactly do for me, as my saddle will then be completed, and air and exercise is what I want. Indeed, I shall be very glad when the event at Scarlets is over, the expectation of it keeps us in a worry, your grandmamma especially; she sits brooding over evils which cannot be remedied, and conduct impossible to be understood.

Now the reports from Keppel St. are rather better; little Harriot's headaches are abated, and Sir Evd. is satisfied with the effect of the mercury, and does not despair of a cure. The complaint I find is not considered incurable nowadays, provided the patient be young enough not to have the head hardened. The water in that case may be drawn

off by mercury. But though this is a new idea to us, perhaps it may have been long familiar to you through your friend Mr. Scud. I hope his high renown is sustained by driving away William's cough.

Tell Wm. that Triggs is as beautiful and condescending as ever, and was so good as to dine with us to-day, and tell him that I often play at nines and think of him.

The Papillons came back on Friday night, but I have not seen them yet, as I do not venture to church. I cannot hear, however, but that they are the same Mr. P. and his sister they used to be. She has engaged a new maidservant in Mrs. Calker's room, whom she means to make also housekeeper under herself.

Old Philmore was buried yesterday, and I, by way of saying something to Triggs, observed that it had been a very handsome funeral; but his manner of reply made me suppose that it was not generally esteemed so. I can only be sure of one part being very handsome, — Triggs himself, walking behind in his green coat. Mrs. Philmore attended as chief mourner, in bombazine, made very short, and flounced with crape.

Tuesday. — I have had various plans as to this letter, but at last I have determined that Uncle Henry shall forward it from London. I want to see how Canterbury looks in the direction. When

once Uncle H. has left us, I shall wish him with you. London has become a hateful place to him, and he is always depressed by the idea of it. I hope he will be in time for your sick. I am sure he must do that part of his duty as excellently as all the rest. He returned yesterday from Steventon, and was with us by breakfast, bringing Edward with him, only that Edwd. stayed to breakfast at Wyards. We had a pleasant family day, for the Altons dined with us, the last visit of the kind probably which she will be able to pay us for many a month.

I hope your own Henry is in France, and that you have heard from him; the passage once over, he will feel all happiness. I took my first ride yesterday, and liked it very much. I went up Mounter's Lane and round by where the new cottages are to be, and found the exercise and everything very pleasant; and I had the advantage of agreeable companions, as At. Cass. and Edward walked by my side. At. Cass. is such an excellent nurse, so assiduous and unwearied! But you know all that already.

Very affectionately yours,

J. Austen.

Miss Knight,
Godmersham Park, Canterbury.

LXXV.

Chawton, Sunday (Sept. 8, 1816).

My dearest Cassandra, — I have borne the arrival of your letter to-day extremely well; anybody might have thought it was giving me pleasure. I am very glad you find so much to be satisfied with at Cheltenham. While the waters agree, everything else is trifling.

A letter arrived for you from Charles last Thursday. They are all safe and pretty well in Keppel St., the children decidedly better for Broadstairs; and he writes principally to ask when it will be convenient to us to receive Miss P., the little girls, and himself. They would be ready to set off in ten days from the time of his writing, to pay their visits in Hampshire and Berkshire, and he would prefer coming to Chawton first.

I have answered him, and said that we hoped it might suit them to wait till the last week in Septr., as we could not ask them sooner, either on your account or the want of room. I mentioned the 23rd as the probable day of your return. When you have once left Cheltenham, I shall grudge every half-day wasted on the road. If there were but a coach from Hungerford to Chawton! I have desired him to let me hear again soon.

He does not include a maid in the list to be

accommodated; but if they bring one, as I suppose they will, we shall have no bed in the house even then for Charles himself, — let alone Henry. But what can we do?

We shall have the Gt. House quite at our command; it is to be cleared of the Papillons' servants in a day or two. They themselves have been hurried off into Essex to take possession, — not of a large estate left them by an uncle, but to scrape together all they can, I suppose, of the effects of a Mrs. Rawstorn, a rich old friend and cousin suddenly deceased, to whom they are joint executors. So there is a happy end of the Kentish Papillons coming here.

No morning service to-day, wherefore I am writing between twelve and one o'clock. Mr. Benn in the afternoon, and likewise more rain again, by the look and the sound of things. You left us in doubt of Mrs. Benn's situation, but she has bespoke her nurse. . . . The F. A.'s dined with us yesterday, and had fine weather both for coming and going home, which has hardly ever happened to them before. She is still unprovided with a housemaid.

Our day at Alton was very pleasant, venison quite right, children well behaved, and Mr. and Mrs. Digweed taking kindly to our charades and other games. I must also observe, for his mother's satisfaction, that Edward at my suggestion de-

voted himself very properly to the entertainment of Miss S. Gibson. Nothing was wanting except Mr. Sweeney; but he, alas! had been ordered away to London the day before. We had a beautiful walk home by moonlight.

Thank you, my back has given me scarcely any pain for many days. I have an idea that agitation does it as much harm as fatigue, and that I was ill at the time of your going from the very circumstance of your going. I am nursing myself up now into as beautiful a state as I can, because I hear that Dr. White means to call on me before he leaves the country.

Evening. — Frank and Mary and the children visited us this morning. Mr. and Mrs. Gibson are to come on the 23rd, and there is too much reason to fear they will stay above a week. Little George could tell me where you were gone to, as well as what you were to bring him, when I asked him the other day.

Sir Tho. Miller is dead. I treat you with a dead baronet in almost every letter.

So you have C. Craven among you, as well as the Duke of Orleans and Mr. Pocock. But it mortifies me that you have not added one to the stock of common acquaintance. Do pray meet with somebody belonging to yourself. I am quite weary of your knowing nobody.

Mrs. Digweed parts with both Hannah and old

cook: the former will not give up her lover, who is a man of bad character; the latter is guilty only of being unequal to anything.

Miss Terry was to have spent this week with her sister, but as usual it is put off. My amiable friend knows the value of her company. I have not seen Anna since the day you left us; her father and brother visited her most days. Edward and Ben called here on Thursday. Edward was in his way to Selborne. We found him very agreeable. He is come back from France, thinking of the French as one could wish, — disappointed in everything. He did not go beyond Paris.

I have a letter from Mrs. Perigord; she and her mother are in London again. She speaks of France as a scene of general poverty and misery: no money, no trade, nothing to be got but by the innkeepers, and as to her own present prospects she is not much less melancholy than before.

I have also a letter from Miss Sharp, quite one of her letters; she has been again obliged to exert herself more than ever, in a more distressing, more harassed state, and has met with another excellent old physician and his wife, with every virtue under heaven, who takes to her and cures her from pure love and benevolence. Dr. and Mrs. Storer are their Mrs. and Miss Palmer — for they are at Bridlington. I am happy to say,

however, that the sum of the account is better than usual. Sir William is returned; from Bridlington they go to Chevet, and she is to have a young governess under her.

I enjoyed Edward's company very much, as I said before, and yet I was not sorry when Friday came. It had been a busy week, and I wanted a few days' quiet and exemption from the thought and contrivancy which any sort of company gives. I often wonder how you can find time for what you do, in addition to the care of the house; and how good Mrs. West could have written such books and collected so many hard words, with all her family cares, is still more a matter of astonishment. Composition seems to me impossible with a head full of joints of mutton and doses of rhubarb.

Monday. — Here is a sad morning. I fear you may not have been able to get to the Pump. The two last days were very pleasant. I enjoyed them the more for your sake. But to-day it is really bad enough to make you all cross. I hope Mary will change her lodgings at the fortnight's end; I am sure, if you looked about well, you would find others in some odd corner to suit you better. Mrs. Potter charges for the name of the High St.

Success to the pianoforte! I trust it will drive you away. We hear now that there is to be no

honey this year. Bad news for us. We must husband our present stock of mead, and I am sorry to perceive that our twenty gallons is very nearly out. I cannot comprehend how the fourteen gallons could last so long.

We do not much like Mr. Cooper's new sermons. They are fuller of regeneration and conversion than ever, with the addition of his zeal in the cause of the Bible Society.

Martha's love to Mary and Caroline, and she is extremely glad to find they like the pelisse. The Debarys are indeed odious! We are to see my brother to-morrow, but for only one night. I had no idea that he would care for the races without Edward. Remember me to all.

Yours very affectionately,

J. Austen.

Miss Austen, Post-Office, Cheltenham.

Note by Lord Brabourne.

I insert here a letter of Jane Austen's written backwards, addressed to her niece "Cassy," daughter of Captain Charles Austen (afterwards Admiral) when a little girl.

LXXVI.

Ym raed Yssac, — I hsiw uoy a yppah wen raey. Ruoy xis snisuoc emac ereh yadretsey, dna dah hcae a eceip fo ekac. Siht si elttil Yssac's

yadhtrib, dna ehs si eerht sraey dlo. Knarf sah nugeb gninrael Nital ew deef eht Nibor yreve gninrom. Yllas netfo seriuqne retfa uoy. Yllas Mahneb sah tog a wen neerg nwog. Teirrah Thgink semoc yreve yad ot daer ot Tnua Ardnassac. Doog eyb ym raed Yssac.

Tnua Ardnassac sdnes reh tseb evol, dna os ew od lla.

Ruoy etanoitceffa tnua,

Enaj Netsua.

Notwahc, Naj. 8.

Note by Lord Brabourne.

In January, 1817, she wrote of herself as better and able to walk into Alton, and hoped in the summer she should be able to walk back. In April her father in a note to Mrs. Lefroy says: "I was happy to have a good account of herself written by her own hand, in a letter from your Aunt Jane; but all who love, and that is all who know her, must be anxious on her account." We all know how well grounded that anxiety was, and how soon her relations had to lament over the loss of the dearest and brightest member of their family.

And now I come to the saddest letters of all, those which tell us of the end of that bright life, cut short just at the time when the world might have hoped that unabated intellectual vigor, supplemented by the experience brought by maturer

years, would have produced works if possible even more fascinating than those with which she had already embellished the literature of her country. But it was not to be. The fiat had gone forth, — the ties which bound that sweet spirit to earth were to be severed, and a blank left, never to be filled in the family which her loved and loving presence had blessed, and where she had been so well and fondly appreciated. In the early spring of 1817 the unfavorable symptoms increased, and the failure of her health was too visible to be neglected. Still no apprehensions of immediate danger were entertained, and it is probable that when she left Chawton for Winchester in May, she did not recognize the fact that she was bidding a last farewell to "Home." Happy for her if it was so, for there are few things more melancholy than to look upon any beloved place or person with the knowledge that it is for "the last time." In all probability this grief was spared to Jane, for even after her arrival at Winchester she spoke and wrote as if recovery was hopeful; and I fancy that her relations were by no means aware that the end was so near.

Note by Lord Brabourne.

Cassandra's letters tell the tale of the event in words that require no addition from me. They are simple and affecting, — the words of one who had

been stricken by a great grief, but whose religion stood her in good stead, and enabled her to bear it with fortitude. The firm and loving bond of union which had ever united the Austen family, naturally intensified their sorrow at the loss of one of their number, and that the one of whom they had been so proud as well as so fond. They laid her within the walls of the old cathedral which she had loved so much, and went sorrowfully back to their homes, with the feeling that nothing could replace to them the treasure they had lost. And most heavily of all must the blow have fallen upon the only sister, the correspondent, the companion, the other self of Jane, who had to return alone to the desolate home, and to the mother to whose comforts the two had hitherto ministered together, but who would henceforward have her alone on whom to rely. . . .

Letters from Miss Cassandra Austen to her niece Miss Knight, after the death of her sister Jane, July 18, 1817.

LXXVII.

WINCHESTER, Sunday.

MY DEAREST FANNY, — Doubly dear to me now for her dear sake whom we have lost. She did love you most sincerely, and never shall I forget the proofs of love you gave her during her illness

in writing those kind, amusing letters at a time when I know your feelings would have dictated so different a style. Take the only reward I can give you in the assurance that your benevolent purpose was answered; you did contribute to her enjoyment.

Even your last letter afforded pleasure. I merely cut the seal and gave it to her; she opened it and read it herself, afterwards she gave it to me to read, and then talked to me a little and not uncheerfully of its contents, but there was then a languor about her which prevented her taking the same interest in anything she had been used to do.

Since Tuesday evening, when her complaint returned, there was a visible change, she slept more and much more comfortably; indeed, during the last eight-and-forty hours she was more asleep than awake. Her looks altered and she fell away, but I perceived no material diminution of strength, and though I was then hopeless of a recovery, I had no suspicion how rapidly my loss was approaching.

I have lost a treasure, such a sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed. She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow; I had not a thought concealed from her, and it is as if I had lost a part of myself. I loved her only too well, — not better than she deserved, but I am conscious that my

affection for her made me sometimes unjust to and negligent of others; and I can acknowledge, more than as a general principle, the justice of the Hand which has struck this blow.

You know me too well to be at all afraid that I should suffer materially from my feelings; I am perfectly conscious of the extent of my irreparable loss, but I am not at all overpowered and very little indisposed, — nothing but what a short time, with rest and change of air, will remove. I thank God that I was enabled to attend her to the last, and amongst my many causes of self-reproach I have not to add any wilful neglect of her comfort.

She felt herself to be dying about half an hour before she became tranquil and apparently unconscious. During that half-hour was her struggle, poor soul! She said she could not tell us what she suffered, though she complained of little fixed pain. When I asked her if there was anything she wanted, her answer was she wanted nothing but death, and some of her words were: "God grant me patience, pray for me, oh, pray for me!" Her voice was affected, but as long as she spoke she was intelligible.

I hope I do not break your heart, my dearest Fanny, by these particulars; I mean to afford you gratification whilst I am relieving my own feelings. I could not write so to anybody else; indeed you are the only person I have written to at all, except

ing your grandmamma, — it was to her, not your Uncle Charles, I wrote on Friday.

Immediately after dinner on Thursday I went into the town to do an errand which your dear aunt was anxious about. I returned about a quarter before six, and found her recovering from faintness and oppression; she got so well as to be able to give me a minute account of her seizure, and when the clock struck six she was talking quietly to me.

I cannot say how soon afterwards she was seized again with the same faintness, which was followed by the sufferings she could not describe; but Mr. Lyford had been sent for, had applied something to give her ease, and she was in a state of quiet insensibility by seven o'clock at the latest. From that time till half-past four, when she ceased to breathe, she scarcely moved a limb, so that we have every reason to think, with gratitude to the Almighty, that her sufferings were over. A slight motion of the head with every breath remained till almost the last. I sat close to her with a pillow in my lap to assist in supporting her head, which was almost off the bed, for six hours; fatigue made me then resign my place to Mrs. J. A. for two hours and a half, when I took it again, and in about an hour more she breathed her last.

I was able to close her eyes myself, and it was a great gratification to me to render her those last

services. There was nothing convulsed which gave the idea of pain in her look; on the contrary, but for the continual motion of the head she gave one the idea of a beautiful statue, and even now, in her coffin, there is such a sweet, serene air over her countenance as is quite pleasant to contemplate.

This day, my dearest Fanny, you have had the melancholy intelligence, and I know you suffer severely, but I likewise know that you will apply to the fountain-head for consolation, and that our merciful God is never deaf to such prayers as you will offer.

The last sad ceremony is to take place on Thursday morning; her dear remains are to be deposited in the cathedral. It is a satisfaction to me to think that they are to lie in a building she admired so much; her precious soul, I presume to hope, reposes in a far superior mansion. May mine one day be reunited to it!

Your dear papa, your Uncle Henry, and Frank and Edwd. Austen, instead of his father, will attend. I hope they will none of them suffer lastingly from their pious exertions. The ceremony must be over before ten o'clock, as the cathedral service begins at that hour, so that we shall be at home early in the day, for there will be nothing to keep us here afterwards.

Your Uncle James came to us yesterday, and is

gone home to-day. Uncle H. goes to Chawton to-morrow morning; he has given every necessary direction here, and I think his company there will do good. He returns to us again on Tuesday evening.

I did not think to have written a long letter when I began, but I have found the employment draw me on, and I hope I shall have been giving you more pleasure than pain. Remember me kindly to Mrs. J. Bridges (I am so glad she is with you now), and give my best love to Lizzie and all the others.

I am, my dearest Fanny,
Most affectionately yours,
Cass. Eliz. Austen.

I have said nothing about those at Chawton, because I am sure you hear from your papa.

LXXVIII.

Chawton, Tuesday (July 29, 1817).

My dearest Fanny, — I have just read your letter for the third time, and thank you most sincerely for every kind expression to myself, and still more warmly for your praises of her who I believe was better known to you than to any human being besides myself. Nothing of the sort could have been more gratifying to me than the manner in which you write of her; and if the dear angel is

conscious of what passes here, and is not above all earthly feelings, she may perhaps receive pleasure in being so mourned. Had she been the survivor, I can fancy her speaking of you in almost the same terms. There are certainly many points of strong resemblance in your characters; in your intimate acqua ntance with each other, and your mutual strong affection, you were counterparts.

Thursday was not so dreadful a day to me as you imagined. There was so much necessary to be done that there was no time for additional misery. Everything was conducted with the greatest tranquillity, and but that I was determined I would see the last, and therefore was upon the listen, I should not have known when they left the house. I watched the little mournful procession the length of the street; and when it turned from my sight, and I had lost her forever, even then I was not overpowered, nor so much agitated as I am now in writing of it. Never was human being more sincerely mourned by those who attended her remains than was this dear creature. May the sorrow with which she is parted with on earth be a prognostic of the joy with which she is hailed in heaven!

I continue very tolerably well, — much better than any one could have supposed possible, because I certainly have had considerable fatigue of body as well as anguish of mind for months back; but I really am well, and I hope I am properly grate-

ful to the Almighty for having been so supported. Your grandmamma, too, is much better than when I came home.

I did not think your dear papa appeared unwell, and I understand that he seemed much more comfortable after his return from Winchester than he had done before. I need not tell you that he was a great comfort to me; indeed, I can never say enough of the kindness I have received from him and from every other friend.

I get out of doors a good deal, and am able to employ myself. Of course those employments suit me best which leave me most at leisure to think of her I have lost, and I do think of her in every variety of circumstance, — in our happy hours of confidential intercourse, in the cheerful family party which she so ornamented, in her sick-room, on her death-bed, and as (I hope) an inhabitant of heaven. Oh, if I may one day be reunited to her there! I know the time must come when my mind will be less engrossed by her idea, but I do not like to think of it. If I think of her less as on earth, God grant that I may never cease to reflect on her as inhabiting heaven, and never cease my humble endeavors (when it shall please God) to join her there.

In looking at a few of the precious papers which are now my property I have found some memorandums, amongst which she desires that one of

her gold chains may be given to her god-daughter Louisa, and a lock of her hair be set for you. You can need no assurance, my dearest Fanny, that every request of your beloved aunt will be sacred with me. Be so good as to say whether you prefer a brooch or ring. God bless you, my dearest Fanny.

Believe me, most affectionately yours,

CASS. ELIZTH. AUSTEN.

Miss KNIGHT,
Godmersham Park, Canterbury.

THE END.

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